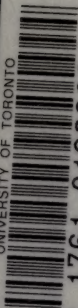


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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FROM THE MONARCHY TO THE
REPUBLIC IN FRANCE 1788-1792

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MCMIV.



Bon, nous voila d'accord.

1789.

THE THREE ORDERS UNITED.

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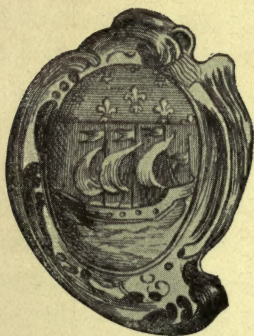
From the Monarchy
To the Republic
in France

1788-1792

By

Sophia H. MacLehose

Author of "The Last Days of the French Monarchy"



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PREFACE.

IN relating the story of the struggle between the Nation and the Crown which led to the fall of the old French Monarchy, I have confined myself almost entirely to the events which took place at Versailles and Paris. Every province, almost every department of France, could furnish its own history of the Revolution, each with its own peculiar interest. But the fight was fought in Paris, for not only were the King, Ministers and National Assembly there, not only were the Parisian journals and the Parisian clubs the most important in the country, but time after time, when a crisis arose, the people of Paris interfered and themselves determined the course of events. If, in describing the risings of the Parisians, I have dwelt little on their turbulent character, it is because this has been sufficiently recognised and, indeed, often exaggerated in popular histories.

I am well aware how much is left unsaid in this short account of so great a period, but in this book as in my former volume I have aimed only at

giving such a resumé of events as may interest the reader, and send him to the great histories for fuller information.

To the generous courtesy of the Earl of Crawford and the kindness of his Librarian, Mr. Edmond, now head of the Signet Library, Edinburgh, I am indebted for the use of contemporary journals lent me from the Bibliotheca Lindesiana at Haigh Hall, Wigan. I am also indebted—through his friend Mr. Louis Dyer of Oxford—to Mr. Henry Standish, of Montjoye, Rambouillet, for permission to quote from unpublished letters written in Paris during the years 1791-92 by his great-aunt, Mrs. Edward Standish of Standish, Wigan. I only regret that lack of space has prevented longer quotations from these lively and interesting letters.

SOPHIA H. MACLEHOSE.

GLASGOW, *October 1st*, 1904.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
THE REVIVAL OF THE STATES-GENERAL, - - - -	I

CHAPTER II.

THE QUESTION OF FORMS, - - - -	17
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

THE ELECTIONS AT PARIS, - - - -	40
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL, - - - -	55
--	----

CHAPTER V.

THE STATES-GENERAL, - - - -	67
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

THE KING AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, - - - -	84
---	----

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING AND THE CAPITAL, - - - -	103
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

REVOLUTION,	PAGE
118	

CHAPTER IX.

LOUIS, "FATHER OF THE COUNTRY,"	135
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS, "RESTORER OF FRENCH LIBERTY,"	154
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

"TO VERSAILLES!"	173
------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

"TO PARIS!"	189
-------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST YEAR OF LIBERTY,	209
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF THE CLERGY,	227
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING AND THE CONSTITUTION,	245
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

MIRABEAU AND THE COURT,	263
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECOND YEAR OF LIBERTY,	281
-----------------------------	-----

CONTENTS.

ix

CHAPTER XVIII.

	PAGE
EASTER, 1791, - - - - -	301

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FLIGHT OF THE KING, - - - - -	317
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX.

MONARCHY OR REPUBLIC? - - - - -	334
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, - - - - -	351
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DECLARATION OF WAR, - - - - -	370
-----------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE COMMUNE, - - - - -	384
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COMING OF THE 'FÉDÉRÉS,' - - - - -	404
--	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

THE END, - - - - -	424
--------------------	-----

LIST OF AUTHORITIES, - - - - -	431
--------------------------------	-----

INDEX, - - - - -	436
------------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
ARMS OF PARIS, - - - - -	<i>Title-page</i>
THE THREE ORDERS UNITED, - - - - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MEDAL. LOUIS XVI., "ROI DES FRANÇAIS," - - -	1
MEDAL. "VIVE LOUIS XVI.," - - - - -	17
THE DEPUTIES OF PARIS ON THEIR WAY TO VERSAILLES, -	48
MEDAL. "RÉGÉNÉRATION DE LA FRANCE," - - -	55
BAILLY, - - - - -	67
MOTTO OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, - - - - -	84
SIÉYÈS, - - - - -	96
MEDAL. "NECKER LE VRAI PÈRE DU PEUPLE," - -	103
CAMILLE DESMOULINS, - - - - -	118
THE SIEGE OF THE BASTILLE, - - - - -	128
MEDAL. "ÉTABLISSEMENT DE LA MAIRIE DE PARIS," -	135
"BREVET" OF A NATIONAL GUARD (reduced to one-fourth of size), - - - - -	152
MEDAL. "ÉPOQUE À JAMAIS MÉMORABLE," - - -	154
FLAG OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OF 5TH BATTALION, -	173
MEDAL. "ARRIVÉE DU ROI À PARIS," - - - - -	189
HÔTEL DE VILLE AND PLACE DE GRÈVE, - - - - -	192
PLAN OF SALLE DU MANÈGE, - - - - -	208

	PAGE
MOTTO OF JACOBIN CLUB, - - - - -	209
BARNAVE, - - - - -	227
THE FUNERAL OF "THE MOST HIGH THE CLERGY OF FRANCE," - - - - -	234
TALLEYRAND, - - - - -	245
PREPARATION FOR THE "FÊTE DE LA FÉDÉRATION," - -	256
GUSTAVE III., - - - - -	263
MIRABEAU, - - - - -	264
MEDAL. "RÈGNE DE LA LOI," - - - - -	281
ASSIGNAT OF FIRST ISSUE (reduced by about half), - -	288
PIUS VI., - - - - -	301
PLAN OF THE TUILERIES AND ITS SURROUNDINGS, - -	304
PÉTION, - - - - -	317
VARENNES, - - - - -	328
DANTON, - - - - -	338
"TÔT, TÔT, TÔT, BATTEZ CHAUD," - - - - -	344
LEOPOLD II., - - - - -	351
ROLAND, - - - - -	370
VERGNIAUD, - - - - -	384
"FÊTE DES SOLDATS DU CHÂTEAUVIEUX," - - - - -	384
ROBESPIERRE, - - - - -	404
THE JACOBIN CLUB, - - - - -	408
MEDAL. "EXEMPLE AUX PEUPLES," - - - - -	424
THE TOWER OF THE TEMPLE, - - - - -	424

CHAPTER I.

THE REVIVAL OF THE STATES-GENERAL.



THE reign of Louis XVI. may be divided into two parts; the first from May 1774 to August 1788, when he was King of France, and the second from August 1788 to August 1792, when he

was first called King of the French. During the first fourteen years France was governed from Versailles, and the king in Council was absolute. The people might murmur, the parlements remonstrate, the ministers resign, but there ended the power of the subject; what the king willed the law executed. During the last four years the balance of power changed. Louis ceased to issue edicts as "by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre," and instead sanctioned decrees as "by the grace of God and the constitutional law of the

State, King of the French." By-and-by he was denied the title of "Sire" on the ground that he was only the "first functionary of the people, to whom alone the quality of Majesty belonged"; a little later it became a question whether he should reign at all, and this question Paris decided by making her king a prisoner, and declaring a Republic.

It is significant that, during the first part of the reign of Louis XVI., interest is centred in Versailles, and during the second in Paris. Versailles was a royal city; Paris, the proud well-beloved capital with rights and privileges of her own, who in some sense held herself the guardian of what remained of the ancient liberties of France.

In the reign of Louis XIV. Paris had ceased to be the residence of the kings of France. For three centuries previously she had struggled restlessly against the ever-increasing demands of the Crown, and in 1648, had for the fifth and last time risen in revolt against the monarchy. Louis XIV. was then a child, but he was old enough to remember the incidents of that revolt, and he never forgave his capital. From the earliest years of his reign, his resolution was taken to separate the court from the city, to shelter the throne from the insults of the capital.

In this resolution there was a great deal more than mere personal feeling. The policy of cen-

tralisation begun by Richelieu and continued by Mazarin was carried to its height by Louis XIV. But this policy could not find a congenial home in the capital. Paris had her Parlement, her Hôtel de Ville, her Châtelet, all of which, though subject to the authority of the king, had yet traditions, principles and pretensions, which ever and again placed them in opposition to that system of the "sole will of the sovereign" which it was the purpose of Louis XIV. to make felt in the length and breadth of the kingdom.

"How," asks M. Monin, "could an absolute monarchy accord with insurrectionary traditions; divine right, with aspirations after a commune; the rigorous laws of ceremonial, the strict hierarchy of rank, with the cynical humour, the merry song, biting satire, the instinct for freedom and equality of the capital?"¹ It is in the conflict between these two—between the autocratic instinct, which after all lay deep in Louis XVI., and that instinct for freedom and equality which found its most characteristic expression in the capital—that lie the interest and tragedy of the later years of his reign.

"This day (August 11th, 1788) about ten o'clock in the morning," writes a contemporary, "the hawkers began to distribute in the streets of the capital

¹ Monin, H., *État de Paris en 1789*, p. 2.

the famous *arrêt* of August the 8th.”¹ That *arrêt* was a promise made by the king in council to call together the States-General of France on May 1st, 1789, and from this promise most historians date the beginning of the great French Revolution.

And yet there was nothing new in convoking the States-General. Under one name or another, meetings between the king and his subjects had been held from the earliest days of the monarchy.² At these meetings laws were made, and questions of peace or war discussed, and the part played by the monarch, we are told, was confined to the proposal of matters for deliberation. Under the Merovingian kings these meetings were composed entirely of nobles, under the Carlovingians of nobles and clergy; and it was not until 1302 that the Commons or Third Estate of France was admitted to a share in the deliberations of the nation. The change was made by Philippe-le-Bel, who was anxious to strengthen the royal power, and who therefore called the Third Estate to his aid and received from it the whole-hearted support refused by his clergy and nobles.

¹ Hardy, *Mes loisirs ou journal d'événements*, Bib. nat. Paris. MSS. fonds français, .6687.

² Under the Franks these meetings met in March in the open fields, and were called the Champ de Mars; in 755 Pépin changed the time of meeting to the more congenial month of May, after which they were sometimes called Champ de Mars and sometimes Champ de Mai.

From this time the national assemblies were called States-General, a meeting of the three Orders of the whole Kingdom of France. They no longer met annually; for the administration of justice, which once formed a large part of their business, had been removed from their jurisdiction and entrusted to the parlements or High Courts of Justice, which sat in each province of France. The States-General were only called together by the king as often as he needed support or money from his subjects, and were looked upon as a body to which the king had recourse in difficulty. But, by consulting his subjects and asking them to contribute money to his treasury, the king implied their right to a share in the responsibilities of government. This implied right very soon became a right claimed by the States-General, and, from the moment the claim was made, that body assumed a critical attitude towards the Crown, until in 1355, when John II. was king, the States-General asserted their right not only to vote and raise the taxes, but to superintend the use made of them.¹

The attitude then taken up was maintained by later meetings, and, in 1576 and 1588, it was laid down as a principle that never, on any pretext

¹See Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, Introduction.

whatever, should a tax be imposed on the nation without the consent of the States-General. After this they were not again summoned until 1614, during the minority of Louis XIII. That meeting was, for all practical purposes, a fiasco; yet, amid scenes described as deplorable, the Third Estate made itself heard, and repeating the old claims, added a request that the States-General should meet every ten years.¹

They did not meet in ten years' time. Their claims and pretensions were too much at variance with the policy of Louis XIII. and of his successors, a policy which, known as the old regime, centred all authority in the king, fostered privilege and class distinction, sold the municipal offices once held by right of election, and everywhere struck at the root of independence. For over one hundred and seventy years the States-General had remained a memory; why were they recalled now?

It has been asserted that France made more progress in the ideas of justice, equality and liberty in the fifteen years of the reign of Louis XVI., which preceded May 1789, than in the twenty-five years which followed it,² and de Tocqueville declares this reign the most prosperous of the old monarchy. The reforms which took place from the

¹ Thierry, A., *Histoire du Tiers État*, p. 200. Paris, 1853.

² Lavergne, A. de, *Les assemblées provinciales sous Louis XVI.*, p. iii.

year 1774 to the year 1789 are unquestionable. The principle of a taxation which should be levied "without distinction or exception of any kind" was acknowledged,¹ the *corvée*, or compulsory labour of the peasant in making public roads and in other public works was abolished;² the suppression of the old trade corporations which exercised exclusive and tyrannous rights was attempted, and in a measure carried out;³ the king freed his serfs; the free circulation of grain within and without the kingdom was decreed;⁴ and a system of provincial assemblies, by which taxes could be more fairly apportioned and local matters more quickly attended to, was instituted.⁵

The administration of justice, in sore need of reform, had had some abuses removed. An accused prisoner, until proved guilty, was exempted from marks of degradation. Prisoners were no longer tortured in order to extract from them confession; judges were obliged to specify on what charge a prisoner was found guilty of death, and not merely to pass judgment "because of the result of the trial," and instead of execution immediately following on the sentence, a month must elapse except in cases of insurrection or riot. In civil courts new arrange-

¹ See Mavidal et Laurent, *Archives parlementaires*, vol. i. p. 257 seq., for *Édits du 19 septembre*.

² du 27 juin.

⁴ du 17 juin, 1788.

³ du 12 mars, 1776.

⁵ du 22 juin, 1788.

ments were made which would render civil suits a little less tedious.¹

One of the great injustices of the old regime was the civil disability of Protestants. Louis XIV. had chosen to assume that all Protestants had either left France or recanted, and therefore, proclaiming that there were none, legislated accordingly. The church registers kept by the Catholic priests were alone held as legal proof of birth, baptism, marriage and death, and thus conscientious Protestants who refused to accept Catholic rites had no legal means of proving their legitimacy—"their very existence"—and were in consequence not only excluded from any civil post, but even from legal right to possess or to will property. No Protestant might sit on the King's Council, hold a post as judge, or teach in any public institution, nor might he, with rare exception, enter a trade corporation. Protestants had their own little hospital of eight beds in the rue de Sève,² under the protection of the Ambassador of Sweden, and their own University, that of Strasbourg, which was without question the most enlightened in France.³ The civil disabilities, in spite of opposition, were removed by an edict of the 19th January, 1788, which received the unani-

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. i. p. 297 seq., *Édits du 8 mai*, 1788.

² Monin, H., *État de Paris en 1789*, p. 248.

³ Liard, L., *L'enseignement supérieur en France*, vol. i. p. 9.

mous approval of the king and his council. But the social disabilities remained.

And besides these definite legislative reforms, there was springing up in France a more enlightened spirit regarding commerce, agriculture and charity. In manufacture, the age of invention, of improved tools, and of machinery had begun. "Commerce," wrote the *Six Corps*,¹ or six principal trades of Paris, in a *mémoire* to the king, "has at length assumed the importance which has, in some sort, always belonged to her—and it is not now too much to say that no negotiation takes place either in the old or new world, no war between the rival nations of Europe that has not commerce for its object, motive or result."² Agricultural Societies had sprung up in France about the middle of the eighteenth century, and by 1787 there was an Agricultural Society in all the more important towns. The members of the Societies were the landed proprietors of the district, and included among their number many of the most distinguished of the French nobility; men who gave their hearty co-operation to the efforts of the Societies by offer-

¹ In 1789 these were first, cloth-makers and mercers; second, grocers; third, hosiers, furriers and hatters; fourth, goldsmiths; fifth, gauze and ribbon-makers; sixth, wine-merchants.

² Chassin, Ch-L., *Les élections et les cahiers de Paris aux derniers États-Généraux*, vol. i. p. 25; *Mémoire présenté au roi par les Six Corps de la ville de Paris*, Nov., 1788.

ing land on which to experiment in the cultivation of new plants, such as madder, clover and hemp, and also by importing at their own expense sheep, horses and cattle to improve existing breeds.¹

The reign of Louis XVI. saw also the dawn of a more thoughtful care for the poor. The laws against beggars were modified, and the principle established that each parish should be responsible for its own poor, and that help should only be given to those unable to earn their own living. Attempts were even made at the organisation of charity. In 1787 Rouen arranged for one central administration of all charitable funds, and other towns attempted similar measures.² The condition of hospitals, a crying need, began to be inquired into, and in 1779, the king founded the well-known Hôpital de la Charité, rue Jacob, with single beds for each patient.³ In 1788 the city of Lyons subscribed 165,000 livres for the same merciful object. The Archbishop of Bordeaux, M. de Cicé, had established an institution for the 'deaf and dumb, under the famous Abbé Sicard. In 1784 an institution for the blind was begun, and in 1787 a *Société des Amis des Noirs* was founded, which eventually became the means of abolishing the trade in negroes carried on in French colonies.

¹ See Lavergne, L. de, *Les assemblées provinciales*, pp. 63, 254, 420.

² *Id.*, p. 251.

³ Monin, H., *État de Paris en 1789*, p. 255.

A different and much less cheerful picture of France under Louis XVI. could easily be drawn. It would be equally true. Legislative changes and the impulses of a kindlier and more enlightened spirit will not work marvels under a thoroughly antiquated system of government. They can only remove an evil here and there, and the miseries depicted as existing under Louis XVI. in such a work as M. Champion's *La France d'après les cahiers de 1789* existed side by side with the reforms. What one has to remember is that reform had begun before the revolution.

The progress, such as it was, made under Louis XVI. was largely due to the great writers of the earlier part of the eighteenth century. These men protested against the old ideas of exclusiveness, restriction and privilege which permeated the old regime. Instead of unequal taxation, they claimed for all men equal rights, and declared that "liberty and equality were the two principal objects of legislation." They protested against the trammels laid on commerce by trade-guilds and government regulations. "Those laws," wrote Montesquieu in 1748, "which oblige a man to remain in his calling, and to pass it on as a matter of course to his children, are and can only be useful in despotic states, where no one can or may have ambition."¹ Agriculture, they

¹ Montesquieu, *L'esprit des lois*, liv. xx. ch. xxii.

contended, could not flourish until privilege was abolished, and they set aside the deep-rooted prejudice which considered manual labour as little better than disgrace. Montesquieu declared the right to work one of the inalienable rights of man, while Rousseau and Diderot went further and exalted manual labour and the mechanical arts above the professions. They did this for different reasons: Rousseau, because manual labour was, of all the occupations which can provide man with the means of livelihood, that nearest akin to nature, and Diderot, because the mechanical arts contributed most to the comfort of mankind. In all that they wrote these men pleaded for the many as against the few.

It was not, however, either the writings of philosophers or the desire for practical reform that induced the king to call the States-General. Side by side with growing prosperity in the country was an increasing deficit in the treasury. From the very outset Louis XVI. had recognised the importance of a proper administration of the finances. He had inherited an almost bankrupt treasury, and to set that treasury on a satisfactory basis had been the great effort of his reign. There were two unwritten laws which, under the old regime, controlled the taxation of France. One was that to the king alone belonged the right of imposing taxes; the

other than on those best able to contribute he must impose the fewest. Older than either of these was the principle laid down in the States-General of 1576 and of 1588 which, if forgotten by her rulers, was remembered by France—the principle that the consent of the nation was essential to the imposition of fresh taxation. It was conflict between the two first principles, the right of the king, and the claims of the privileged, which brought about an appeal to the third, the will of the country as expressed in the States-General.

For in matters of finance, at all events, the old regime had come to a dead-lock. Larger contributions from the country had become an absolute necessity if the balance between receipts and expenditure were to be made and kept even. How to obtain such contributions was the difficulty, for the clergy, the nobles and the privileged members of the Third Estate, all largely exempt from taxation, cried out against the abolition of their privilege, and the unprivileged could pay no more. Turgot and Necker, from love of justice, as well as from desire to refill the treasury, Calonne from sheer necessity, had attempted reforms which tended to equalise the burden. Against them rose the phalanx of the privileged, and one by one Turgot, Necker and Calonne fell.

Now the stronghold of the privileged was the

Parlement of Paris, backed by the provincial parlements. Yet for years the parlements had stood as the defenders of the people against the despotism of the Crown. All royal edicts were sent to them for registration, and they had the right to direct the king's attention to, and send him respectful remonstrance on, anything they considered a grievance in his edicts. These remonstrances frequently expressed sentiments so just in their general bearing that men forgot to notice that the remonstrances were invariably occasioned by something which touched the interests of the privileged. Often enough it happened that to entrench on certain privileges was injustice. But the long-continued popularity of the parlements is only to be accounted for by the fact that interest in a particular right was confounded with enthusiasm for a general cause.

However this may be, the fact remains that the parlements retained their popularity with the people even while they resisted the Crown's proposals for a fairer system of taxation. It was a curious position; the Crown pleading for justice, the parlements resisting justice, and the people taking the side of the parlements. But the reason was simple enough. The parlements, and the privileged generally, consisted of two parties, one in favour of the old regime, the other in favour of reform. Both these parties looked to a meeting of the States-

General as likely to forward their cause. Those who wished to retain privilege believed that the States-General would insist on the maintenance of the old order of things. Those who desired reform believed that the States-General alone would carry out reform in a thorough spirit and place it on a secure basis. Thus it was that both parties, whether from self-interest or from love of justice, joined in the cry for the States-General, in other words, appealed from what they considered a despotic act of the Crown to the decision of the nation; this appeal was the explanation of the continued popularity of the parlements.

For the nation was discontented; the working out of new ideas was made impossible by the existence of old institutions, progress was hampered by old regulations and laws. The increase in the prosperity of the middle classes made the distinction between noble and common the more galling. The very reforms effected made men more alive to the crying injustices which prevailed, more anxious for greater and more radical reform.

Now an assembly of the States-General would give France an opportunity for expressing her general ideas on reform, and for stating, at the same time, her particular complaints.

From the earliest days the States-General had been recognised as a legal channel by which the

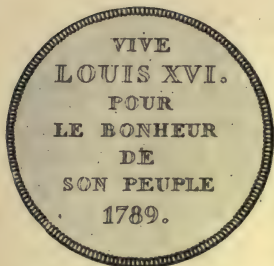
people might relate their wants and grievances to the king ; the drawing up and presenting of *cahiers* or documents in which the grievances of the people were duly set forth was considered the first duty of the members of the States-General. At the same time, the assembling of the States-General for the purpose of proposing fresh taxation was an acknowledgment of their right to consent to or refuse that taxation, and the reformers hoped so to use this right as to enforce the redress of grievances.

To summon the States-General was therefore a very serious matter. It admitted a long-forgotten claim, and it gave the right to bring forward complaints and projects of reform, and for this reason Loménie de Brienne, Minister of Finance, resisted the demand as long as possible. He resorted to every available expedient: he tried loans, he virtually abolished the parlements, he appealed to the Church, he used money intended for charitable purposes, but in vain. Without fresh taxation he found government impossible, and on August 8th, 1788, the Convocation of the States-General, vaguely promised for more than a year, was fixed for the first of May, 1789.¹

¹See *Last Days of the French Monarchy*, chap. xxiii., for a fuller account of the struggle.

CHAPTER II.

THE QUESTION OF FORMS.



MEDAL STRUCK AFTER THE CONVOCATION OF THE STATES-GENERAL.

THE promise of the States-General at a fixed date was in itself a great event. The representatives of the people had not met for over five generations, and, even as an historical incident, such an assembly was of the highest interest. The curiosity of men

was roused, and they began to ask questions about the old States-General.

This curiosity had been stimulated by the action of the government. When Brienne, tired of the opposition of the parlements, had in May 1788 instituted a new body called the *Cour plénière*, to which in future the king's edicts should be sent for registration, he at the same time set up a number of new law-courts and put the parlements *en vacances*,

that is, suspended their sittings. His act was intensely unpopular. Men refused to sit on the *Cour plénière*, lawyers to plead in the new courts; there were disturbances all over France. Brienne's move utterly failed. In June he tried another expedient; he summoned an extraordinary meeting of the clergy and asked them to vote a voluntary gift to the treasury. They refused, and Brienne, deserted by the clergy and hated by the parlements, turned to the middle classes. He induced the king to invite their co-operation in preparing for a convocation of the States-General which he now saw was inevitable. By an *arrêt*, published on the 5th of July 1788, Louis invited the old provincial *États*,¹ municipal bodies, judges, learned Academies, and all who had access to ancient records to make research into the constitution of former States-General.² Comments might be added and wishes expressed.

This *arrêt* was an act of great importance, if only that it allowed, for the moment, liberty of speech. In ordinary circumstances all published writings had to be submitted to one of the royal censors.³ These officers, often slack and easy-going on matters of morality, were exceedingly strict where the traditions

¹ See note, p. 35.

² See *Collection des Édits de Louis XVI.*, Brit. Mus., 27 d.

³ The *Almanach Royal* for 1789 gives the list of censors as follows: History and belles-lettres, 80; mathematics and physics, 9; chemistry and natural philosophy, 8; anatomy, 5; medicine, 21; jurisprudence, 33.

of Church or State were concerned ; and if, by publishing their books in a foreign country, men evaded the censorship, and yet smuggled them into France, the parlements were on the watch to seize offending works, try them in the courts as if they were living persons, condemn them to be burned by the common executioner, and to fine, imprison or banish their author.¹ The *arrêt* of July 5th itself licensed the results of inquiry which might therefore be printed and sent to the Keeper of the Seals without examination, while the Parlement of Paris, even had it wished to interfere, was *en vacances* and could not burn seditious writings at the foot of the grand stair-case of the Palais de Justice.

As a result, Paris was flooded with pamphlets,² many of which were not intended for the Keeper of the Seals, and some of which, when the parlements were recalled, and the law became less tolerant, were seized and burned in all solemnity. Meantime every man hastened to express his opinion, to educate the people in the duties of citizenship or incite them against the tyranny of privilege.

¹ See for example of such a trial, B. M. P. (Brit. Mus. pamphlets), *Parlements*, R. 22. *Arrêt de la cour du Parlement rendu les chambres assemblées, les pairs y séant, qui condamne un Imprimé ayant pour titre : Délibération à prendre par le Tiers État dans toutes les municipalités du royaume de France.*

² Of these the most important were the pamphlets of the Abbé Sieyès, of Mounier and of the lawyer Target.

In the second place, this *arrêt* made France realise, as she might not otherwise have done, the importance of the forms to be used in summoning the States-General. One is apt to suppose that so old an institution must have had settled forms about which there could be no dispute. This, however, was not so. In 1484, for example, the States-General set aside the usual division into Orders, and divided itself into six *bureaux*: in 1560 each Order met in a separate building. In 1484 the number of deputies was two hundred and eighty-four; in 1356 it had been over eight hundred. The first meeting of the States-General was held in the nave of Notre-Dame at Paris, the later meetings at Paris, Blois, Tours, Chartres, or Orléans, as the king might choose. The form of election was also unsettled; in short, who should elect, how many deputies should be elected, what proportion the numbers in each Order should bear to each other, whether each Order should deliberate in a separate chamber and the majority in each chamber count as one vote, or whether all three should deliberate together, and count the votes by head, were points on which there was no settled precedent.¹

Lastly, the decree was important because on such points, whether wisely or foolishly, it appealed to

¹ See on old States-General, Picot, G., *Histoire des États-Généraux*, 1355-1614, Paris, 1872.

the nation, and in so doing implied the right of the citizens to a voice in their government. With this appeal Brienne gave absolute monarchy away.

The inquiry was entered into with zest,¹ and the more evident it became that the constitution of the States-General was elastic the more anxious was each party to secure forms which would serve its own end.

If the Third Estate were to have a real political importance it must see that it was not over-weighted by the two higher Orders. If the higher Orders were to retain their privileges, they must vote by Orders, and thus preserve their power of out-voting the commons, even although the king, to strengthen the Third Estate, and in fairness to its superior numbers, should grant them double the deputies given to the clergy or the nobles.

What then was the Third Estate, whose place in the great Assembly was so significant? At first sight the question seems easy enough to answer, for the term Third Estate, like that of commons in England, covered all French subjects who were neither nobles nor prelates, and was also applied to their representatives in the States-General. But

¹In the *Bibliothèque Nationale* of Paris is a catalogue (Le, 27-23) containing the titles of twelve hundred and forty-nine of the *mémoires* sent to the Keeper of the Seals, and in the *Archives Nationales* an interesting little collection of some of these. (*Collection Rondonneau*, A.D.¹)

in the days immediately preceding, and also in those following the outbreak of the Revolution, there was in France a sharply-defined line between the two great divisions of the Third Estate, between the *bourgeois* and the *manant*. The first term covered all that was deemed respectable and cultured, the second all that was loutish and repellent in that Estate.

Technically the bourgeois was the man admitted to the municipal rights and privileges of a town. He was exempt from payment of *taille* on property held by him within the town of which he was a burgher, and also on a certain proportion of the land he might hold outside of it. He was exempt also from *franc-fief*, or the sum paid to the Crown on the purchase of land. In this technical sense an artisan or a cultivator of the fields might become a bourgeois, but practically the bourgeois was the townsman who had acquired wealth, was well-educated, and who arrogated to himself all municipal honours and responsibilities.¹

From the middle ages downwards the towns had held a better position than the rural districts of the kingdom; for over a hundred years they alone had represented the Third Estate in the States-General. By the end of the fifteenth century the inhabitants of the country districts were invited to

¹ See Babeau, A., *La ville sous l'ancien régime*, vol. i. p. 23 *seq.*

elect deputies and to draw up a list of their complaints, but they could not themselves be elected, and their *cahiers* or complaints were revised by the towns before reaching the king.¹ "The *bourgeoisie* alone," writes Louis Blanc, "under the deceptive name of *tiers état*, had a place in the States-General beside the clergy and the nobles,"² and it is of this class that historians of the French Revolution generally think when they speak of the Third Estate.

For, although the deputies of this Estate who sat in the Assembly summoned for May, 1789, represented much more than the *bourgeoisie*, they did not for a moment identify themselves with all those whom they represented. They thought of themselves as something quite apart, and were, as we shall see, indignant at a proposal to call their Assembly an assembly of "the people." For to "the people" belonged the cultivator of the soil, whether farmer, *métayer*,³ or mere labourer, the small tradesman, the artisan who worked as *compagnon* with and for his master, the countryman who alternately plied his loom and tilled his field, as well as the unskilled labourers—as numerous in Paris as the *ouvriers* themselves—and that home-

¹ See Babeau, A., *La ville sous l'ancien régime*, vol. i. p. 4 seq.

² Blanc, Louis, *La révolution française*, vol. i. p. 156.

³ *Métayer*, i.e. a peasant who cultivated the proprietor's soil, bore a certain proportion of the expense of cultivation, and shared the profits.

less, miserable class often descended from freed serfs who possessed nothing, and wandered from place to place begging as they went, and having Paris or some great city as their goal.

It was not to secure a share in the government for the people, but for themselves, that the *bourgeoisie* wrote pamphlets and sent petitions. For the people it was enough, meantime, that abuses were removed and reforms effected.

Hitherto the place held by the *bourgeoisie* in the States-General had been very subordinate, but it could be so no longer. New ideas had dawned upon the world and had taken strong hold of that *haute bourgeoisie*, that aristocracy of the Third Estate to whom the edict of July 5th appealed. This was of all classes in France the best educated, and the best able to use the opportunity it saw before it; it had attained its full manhood and refused longer to be held in subservience, and this is why the return of the Third Estate to political power meant change, and, unless great wisdom were shown on every side, meant also revolution.

Meantime, events at Versailles followed one another in rapid succession. The difficulties of the Crown did not end with the promise of August 8th. That promise had pleased the country, but it had not filled the treasury, and so great was the need that just one week later, the criers, whose

business it was to proclaim the royal edicts in the streets of Versailles and of Paris, were heard announcing that the Crown must ask its creditors to receive payment, three-fifths in money and two-fifths in promissory notes.¹

"I shall never forget," says a contemporary, "what I felt on hearing this edict read at Paris and Versailles. Even now the recollection of the harsh voices of the men makes me think of the dread subterranean sounds which precede a convulsion of nature."² And the very men whose business it was to proclaim the royal edicts proclaimed this one in low voices, and hardly dared to read it to the end.

That *arrêt* decided the fate of Brienne. He had been Minister of Finance since May, 1787, when he succeeded Calonne, and he had done nothing to improve the condition of the treasury; and now rumours of national bankruptcy were rife in Paris, and the class which national bankruptcy would most affect was the *bourgeoisie*, the class which it was the policy of the Crown just then to conciliate. It was they who lent money to the State, and were paid their interest day by day, so many at a time, in the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville. "The

¹ *Collection des Édits*, B. M., 27 d. *Arrêt du conseil d'état du roi concernant l'ordre et la forme des paiements du 16 août.*

² Weber, J., *Mémoires concernant Marie-Antoinette*, vol. i. p. 250. Paris, 1822.

people properly so-called," wrote the Comte de Mercy, Austrian Ambassador, friend and adviser of the queen, "seem quiet enough. It is the bourgeois with money invested in government stock, the merchants and bankers in whom is centred the boundless anger against Brienne."¹ The ferment in Paris was such that the Comte d'Artois, the king's younger brother, went to Marie-Antoinette and told her that the king had not a moment to lose and that Brienne must resign.

At such a crisis there was only one man who could be called upon to succeed and that was Necker, the Swiss banker, who had already been Controller of Finance from 1776-1781. The king disliked Necker, and Brienne enjoyed the support of the queen, but things had come to such a pass that Marie-Antoinette herself helped to negotiate the change of ministers, and on August 25th Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Sens and Cardinal elect, left Versailles.

The task bequeathed to his successor was not light. "The rumours concerning the state of the treasury," wrote Mercy from Paris to the queen at Versailles on August 23rd, "are frightful. I know beyond question, that those who have the

¹ Arneth, A. von, *Correspondance secrète entre le comte de Mercy-Argenteau, l'empereur Joseph II. et le prince de Kaunitz*, vol. ii. p. 200. Paris, 1889-1891.

statements in their hands expect bankruptcy in a few days.”¹ “The government,” Necker himself wrote, “was paying certain of its obligations in paper, its credit was gone, there were only five hundred thousand livres in the Treasury, and within a week several million must be found.”² But financial difficulties, however great, seemed to vanish under his control. In one day after Necker’s recall the value of the public funds rose thirty per cent., capitalists advanced money,—the Paris notaries alone lent six million francs,—and creditors declared themselves willing to wait. Confidence in the new minister’s ability was enormous, and if any man could have dispensed with or postponed the meeting of the States-General, it was Necker. But even greater than confidence in his ability was confidence in his good faith. Necker knew this, and in accepting office made it a condition that the promise of the king regarding the States-General should be kept. In recalling Necker, the king once more pledged his word that the States-General should meet in May, and on the keeping of that word depended Necker’s strength. He therefore set himself at once to the work of preparation.

¹ Arneth, A. von, *Correspondance secrète entre le comte de Mercy-Argenteau, l’empereur Joseph II. et le prince de Kaunitz*, vol. ii. p. 209. Paris, 1889-1891.

² Necker, J., *Sur l’administration de M. Necker par lui-même*, p. 27.

For this, Necker was less well-fitted than for the control of finance. A clearly defined policy was needed, if the Crown were to hold its own and to lead the States-General. Unfortunately, Necker had no clearly defined ideas, and was too careful of his reputation to risk it with any class. Welcomed with enthusiasm by the people, Necker was also welcomed by the privileged, but of his popularity with them he was less secure. He was not, however, less desirous to retain it. "Few historians," says Droz, "recognise how anxious Necker was to obtain the approval of the privileged Orders—he aspired to a universal chorus of praise, and thus placed himself in a delicate position."¹ Now, when the king in July asked for research and opinions regarding the form of the old States-General he reserved to himself the right to decide on those to be adopted in 1789. This right he must soon exercise; but Louis had no initiative faculty, and his minister cared more for his own reputation than for the prestige of the Crown. The decision, therefore, became largely a matter of chance.

If, on his return to power, Necker's first aim was to restore the financial confidence of the country, his next was to calm the disturbances taking place in different districts in France. These had been excited by Brienne's action regarding the parlements.

¹ Droz, Jos., *Histoire du règne de Louis XVI.*, vol. i. p. 225.

Necker therefore resolved to recall the parlements, and by an edict issued on September 23rd, the courts of the parlements were ordered to resume their usual duties, the changes introduced by Brienne were abolished, and still further to reassure the people, the opening of the States-General was fixed for January instead of May.

At eight o'clock next morning the Parlement of Paris found itself once more in the Grand'-Chambre of the Palais de Justice. It was welcomed with acclamation. The halls and courts were thronged with people, shouts of applause and cries of joy resounded on all sides. It was for the last time. Two days later the Parlement of Paris in registering the king's edict of the 23rd declared that it would continue to demand the convocation of the States-General, but added, "according to the forms observed in 1614." Now in 1614 the clergy had one hundred and forty deputies, the nobles one hundred and thirty-two, and the Third Estate one hundred and ninety-two. In 1614 the clergy, nobles and Third Estate debated in separate chambers. In 1614 the orators of the clergy and of the nobles knelt as they addressed the king, but at his royal command rose and finished their addresses standing, while those whom they represented sat; but the orator of the Third Estate remained kneeling as long as he spoke, and his

colleagues remained standing. In 1614 a deputy of the Third Estate compared the three Orders to "three brothers, sons of their common mother, France, of whom the clergy was the eldest, the nobles the second, and the Third Estate the youngest." "Sire," complained a noble a few days later, "I am ashamed to repeat the words which have offended us; tell them that they can in no wise compare themselves to us, make them recognise what we are by birth, teach them the difference between us; the difference between a master and his valet."¹ These were the forms, and this the spirit of the States-General in 1614, and the five words, *suivant la forme de 1614*, inserted in its *arrêt* of September 24th, destroyed the long-continued popularity of the Parlement of Paris, a popularity it never regained.

The resolution of the Parlement of Paris increased the difficulty of the Crown. For influence and prestige it stood perhaps first among the large body of the privileged, and it had declared for the old order of things: at the same time its declaration only made the resolve of the *bourgeoisie* not to submit to the old order the more determined. The government was much perplexed. "In the midst of an embarrassment shared by all the ministers," Necker had what he calls "the happy inspira-

¹ Picot, G., *Histoire des États-Généraux*, vol. iii. p. 345.

tion”¹ of re-calling the Notables summoned by Calonne in 1787. The inspiration was hardly happy, for it was a confession that the Crown had no definite policy, it was an insult to the Third Estate, and something very like an insult to the king. For to a body of men in which almost all the members enjoyed the privileges attached to nobility, was to be submitted the decision as to the place which the Third Estate was to hold in the assembly of the nation; while to this same body, which only eighteen months before had withstood the king, rejected his proposals and virtually dismissed his minister, was to be entrusted the framing of a policy for the Crown.

The decision come to by the Notables was exactly what might have been expected. Fifty-four questions, including all conceivable difficulties, were submitted to them, but only two were of paramount importance. These were the questions known as “double representation” and “vote by head,” that is, the questions, first, whether the commons, as far out-numbering the clergy and nobles of the realm, should not have double their number of deputies in the States-General; and, second, whether the vote on any motion should be taken by each Order as a whole, or by the majority of votes given by the deputies as individuals. In the first case, the Orders would

¹ Necker, J., *Histoire de la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 80.

deliberate separately ; in the second, they must deliberate together.

As in 1787, the Notables divided themselves into six *bureaux*, presided over by the princes of the blood. Five of the *bureaux* advised vote by Order and an equal number of representatives in each Estate ; one only, that presided over by the Comte de Provence, the king's brother next in age, advised double representation, but left undecided the question of voting by Order or by head.

More pronounced than the deliverance of the Parlement of Paris or of the Notables was that of the princes of the blood. In a *mémoire* sent to the king they declared that all change was dangerous, that the State was in peril, and that salvation was only to be found in adhering to the time-honoured distinction of Orders and the subordination of the Third Estate. " Let the Third Estate cease to attack the rights of the two first Orders, rights which, old as the monarchy itself, ought to be regarded as unalterable." ¹

Such was the attitude of the princes of the blood, the prelates, nobles and magistrates as represented by the Notables and the Parlement of Paris. But however prejudiced the privileged were as a class, it must be remembered that there were among them

¹ *Mavidal et Laurent Archives parlementaires*, vol. i. p. 487 ; *Mémoire présenté au roi par les princes*.

some of the noblest spirits in France. "It is not," writes M. Chérest, "one of the least striking peculiarities of this singular period that associations more or less revolutionary were almost entirely composed of members of the aristocracy. While the nobility and clergy, as a body, compromised their very existence by the injustice and tactlessness of their pretensions, there were ecclesiastics and nobles who honoured themselves by taking their place in the front rank of progress, and by paving the way for the Third Estate. Without their aid, without their instructions the *bourgeoisie* must have halted. Upheld and guided by them it acted with the more assurance, and by and by its ardour, stimulated by the struggle, knew neither curb nor obstacle."¹

The privileged became alarmed, and in order to preserve that distinction of rank dearer to them than pecuniary advantage, they were at last willing to consent to a renunciation of exemptions in taxation. In that same *mémoire* in which the princes protested against the attitude of the Third Estate, they declared that "if it would cease its attacks on the two first Orders, they in their turn would consent to the most perfect equality in taxation." A few days earlier the Notables had solemnly renounced their pecuniary privileges, and on the 5th of December the Parliament of Paris, influenced perhaps by Necker and

¹ Chérest, A., *La chute de l'ancien régime*, vol. ii. p. 107.

conscious of its unpopularity, declared itself ready to see the present taxes replaced by others levied equally on all. But the Third Estate was no longer content with renunciation of pecuniary privileges. It wished for social and political equality, and would not accept as a sacrifice what it demanded as a right.

Two things strengthened its hand—the institution of provincial assemblies and events which had occurred in Dauphiné. In 1787 provincial assemblies, to which were entrusted the distribution of taxes, the management of public works, etc., had been set up in those provinces of France, known as the *pays d'élection*.¹ In these assemblies the Crown had arranged that the Third Estate should always be equal in number to the two others combined, and that the three Orders should deliberate in one chamber and vote by head. To the provincial assemblies the king himself had yielded what the Third Estate now asked for the States-General.

Events in Dauphiné were even more significant.

¹ Such provinces were the oldest parts of France, and were called *pays d'élection*, because in them the States-General of 1356-1357 had appointed certain officers, elected by the people and called *élus*, to distribute and collect the taxes. Charles V., 1364-1380, changed the *élus* of the people, into crown officers, and *pays d'élection* became a misnomer. It was, however, preserved in distinction to the *pays d'états*,—States acquired later, by treaty and not by conquest, and which, allowed to retain their old *états*, remained more independent and more prosperous than the *pays d'élection*. By 1789 the *états* had lost their old vitality.

Opposition to the edicts of May 1788¹ had been unanimous in every parlement in France, but in Dauphiné opposition had been carried to the point of open rebellion. Like those of Brittany, Bordeaux, and Franche-Comté, the Parlement of Dauphiné had refused to register the edicts, and had been ordered into exile. The magistrates prepared to obey, but the people unhorsed their carriages, demanded the key of the Palais de Justice and the re-establishment of the parlement. Troops were called out, but were powerless before the mob, and a hurried message was sent to the magistrates praying them to go in their robes in all haste to the Palais de Justice, and calm the people if they could. They succeeded, and when order was fully restored, re-packed their trunks and drove quietly into exile.²

A few days later, on the 14th June, 1788, representatives of the clergy, nobles and bourgeois of Grenoble met in the Hôtel de Ville. Deprived of their parlement, they then and there, at one o'clock in the morning of the 15th, resolved to call back to life their ancient *États*. They therefore convoked the three Orders of Dauphiné for the 21st of July. This news reached the Government, and directions were sent to the municipal authorities at Grenoble forbidding them to open their doors to anyone not

¹ See *Last Days of French Monarchy*, chap. xxiii.

² See Chérest, A., *La chute de l'ancien régime*, vol. ii. p. 9 *seq.*

a member of the *bureau de la ville* or town council. The Assembly met therefore in the Château of Vizille, the house of Claude Périer, a rich manufacturer; there the *États* reconstituted themselves and appointed their next meeting for September. In the interval Brienne had been replaced by Necker, whose policy was one of peace-making. He therefore made no opposition to the next meeting, only requiring that the king should appoint its president. To this, after some delay, the *États* consented, and on September 10th they met at Romans, a town about sixty miles distant from Grenoble. They fixed their number at one hundred and forty-four, half of whom were to be members of the Third Estate, agreed to deliberate together and to vote by head, and took care to explain that though for the moment they had, out of deference to the king, accepted his nomination of a president, in future they intended to claim their right to elect every member themselves.

. All this was ratified by the King's Council on the 22nd October, and the *États de Dauphiné* stood an established fact, an incentive to reformers, and a model sanctioned by the Crown on which to frame the constitution of the States-General.

What then was Necker to do? On one hand was a France clamouring for equality, on the other powerful Orders determined not to yield. He drew

up a memorial, which would, he hoped, more or less satisfy all parties. This he submitted to the king, and Louis considered it with unusual care. The ministers were not agreed. Barentin and three others were opposed to Necker; the discussions were long, lasting for three or four hours at a time, and the king's patience, Barentin tells us, never failed.¹ At length on December 27th the memorial was brought before the Council, and that it might be the more freely discussed the *conseil des dépêches* was summoned—a larger body than that of the king's ordinary Council.

For the first time at such a Council the queen appeared. Her presence showed her anxiety; she kept profound silence, but it was easy to see that her sympathy was in this case with the Third Estate; she had suffered cruelly from the aristocracy in the affair of the necklace; she had found the Notables intractable and indifferent to the Crown, and she looked for loyalty to the Third Estate. Only one of the great questions in dispute was decided by the Council—that of double representation. It was agreed that the number of deputies in the Third Estate must equal that of the clergy and nobles combined; also that the number of deputies was to be at least one thousand, and the numbers

¹ Barentin, Comte de (Keeper of the Seals), *Mémoire autographe*, p. 63 *seq.*

from each electoral district were to be as nearly as possible in proportion to its population. These decisions were proclaimed to the nation a few days later in a pamphlet published by Necker and known as the *Résultat du Conseil du 27 décembre 1788*.¹ Besides declaring the decisions, this famous document embodied the proposals which the Crown offered France in view of the elections to the States-General. These were, a recognition of the right of the nation to control taxation, the periodical meeting of the States-General, the submission of the budget of expenses to the deputies, a fixed civil list, consideration of the questions of the liberty of the press and of *lettres de cachet* by the States-General, revival of the old provincial *États*, so as to form a bond between the local and central administrations, a simplification of the administrative methods and equality of all in matter of taxation. It was, as M. Aulard points out, a revolution to which the Crown pledged itself. In other words, "it was the transformation of despotism into a parliamentary regime"² which Necker submitted to the king, and which Louis accepted.

As such, all France received the *Résultat du Conseil*. "I started from Paris," wrote the Comte de Beugnot, "carrying with me the famous *Résultat*,

¹ In *Archives parlementaires*, vol. i. p. 489.

² Aulard, A., *Études et leçons de la révolution française*, p. 53.

and the memory of the prodigious effect its publication had produced in the capital.”¹ And yet, had France been careful to read between the lines she might have been less hopeful. Nothing definite was said on common deliberation and vote by head, and the distinct assertion was made that “never would the king allow the slightest prejudice to the seignorial and honorary prerogatives of the two upper Orders”—in other words, “nobles alone would be admitted to rank in the army, to posts in the magistracy, and to dignities in the church.”² It was a question whether Louis really understood the full bearing of the document he had so carefully considered, and to which he had given his approval; this question time would solve; meantime the next step was to send out letters of convocation.

¹ Beugnot, Comte de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 125.

² Chérest, A., *La chute de l'ancien régime*, vol. ii. p. 229.

CHAPTER III.

THE ELECTIONS AT PARIS.



"LE TIR ÉTAT SOUTIENDRA."

moment the revival of the States-General was promised the question of finance sank and was all but forgotten in disputes on rights, liberties, equalities. These were the things of which men thought, when invited to make research into the forms of the old States-General.

The *Résultat du Conseil* of December 27th, if it did not promise vote by head, had at least relieved

FINANCE, as we have seen, occasioned the convocation of the States-General. On the question of finance the old regime had come to a dead-lock. But it was not finance which profoundly interested the country; indeed from the

France from the fear of a revival of the forms of 1614. The letters of convocation did more. They established a uniform mode of election and laid down a broad basis of franchise.

Instead of election by privileged bodies, as in older days, the ancient division of France into *bailliages*¹ was adopted, each *bailliage* sending four deputies to the States-General—one clergyman, one noble, and two members of the Third Estate. Instead of restricting the number and condition of those who voted for the Third Estate, every man born or naturalized a Frenchman, who was a householder, paid taxes, and was twenty-five years old, was admitted an "active citizen," and as such was entitled to a vote. But the "active citizens" were considered too numerous to vote directly for the deputies. They were told to meet in parish, *i.e.* primary assemblies, and there choose from among their number electors—in large towns two, and in small towns or country parishes one, for every hundred voters. The electors thereafter met in a town appointed by the king in each *bailliage* to choose the deputies. The regulations for the two first Orders were simpler. Every clergyman holding a benefice, and every noble possessing a *fief*, was, as such, an elector, entitled to

¹ Under the old regime the *bailliage* was an important 'territorial unity,' for electoral, administrative, military, financial and judicial purposes. In 1789 it was important only as an electoral and judicial division of France.

choose the deputies of his Order.¹ The difficulties and delays attendant on deciding the "forms" had obliged Necker to return to the original date, May 1st, 1789, as the opening day of the States-General, and it was only on January 24th that the king's regulations were published, and on the last Sunday of that month that they were read to the people by the parish priest of every church in France. Within eight days the "active citizens" must meet and vote for their electors. But before voting they must draw up the parish *cahier*.

From 1560 downwards the meeting of the States-General had been preceded by a public inquiry into the needs and wishes of the people, and from this custom originated the *cahiers*. In olden days the *cahiers* were simply an account of the matters which the people wished to see altered; in other words, rolls of grievances; but times had changed, and "the electoral assemblies," says M. Gomel, "were no longer willing to have their deputies appear at Versailles as suppliants,"² and thus the *cahiers* of 1789 also expressed the political opinions and contained the instructions of the voters to those chosen to represent them. These *cahiers* the electors from the villages and small towns carried with them to

¹ *Règlements du 24 janvier, 1789*. Religious communities of both sexes and unbeneficed clergy voted by representatives.

² Gomel, Ch., *Histoire financière de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. v.

the assembly of the *bailliage*, and there they compared and compiled the separate documents and drew up a general *cahier* for each Order—for the clergy, nobles, and Third Estate of every *bailliage* in the country, after which they elected the deputies.

Such, in rough outline, was the electoral programme. It had a two-fold effect on the future of the States-General. In the first place it provided a process of selection of deputies; in the second, it awakened France to her social condition. The fact that the electors had to bear the expense and loss of time involved in attending the electoral assemblies of the *bailliages* meant that only the better off among the voters were chosen as electors. The Chartreux monks of Bellay, we are told, drew up their *cahier* and chose a brother to carry it to the electoral assembly at Nevers. But the brother chosen had no money with which to go. The monks therefore hit upon the expedient of writing to Necker and asking him to transmit money to take their representative to Nevers.¹ Not many parish or other assemblies would pursue so naïve a course, but the question of money must have affected the choice in all. The electoral programme was not therefore quite so democratic as appeared at first sight.

Again, the drawing up of the *cahiers* resulted in the creation of a new political power in France.

¹ Labot, A., *La convocation des États-Généraux*, p. 238.

Until the people were called upon to express their grievances they did not realise all they suffered. It was in the early months of 1789 that there burst forth from France a cry which found expression in the well-known words and forms of the Liturgy,—in the Litanies, the Pater-Nosters, the Lamentations, of the Third Estate. “O ye who journey in our provinces and go into the hidden corners of the capital, come into our work-places, consider and see if there be suffering, if there be grief like unto ours.”¹ “Sire, have pity on us; Nobles who have defended the cause of the Third Estate, pray for us; Pastors and *curés* who know the sufferings of the people speak for us; from the *Mémoire* of the Princes, . . . from the forms of 1614 deliver us, Sire; from the ignorance of judges, from the inquisition of the press, . . . from the game laws, the *corvée* and the *taille*,—from national bankruptcy;—from the prisons of the Bastille preserve us.”²

At the same time the lower classes of France first became politically important in their own eyes. “In the preparation of the *cahiers*,” says M. Aulard, “bourgeois and peasant found themselves together; they talked one with another, they dis-

¹ B. M. P., Tiers-État, R. 49, *Semaine-sainte ou lamentations du Tiers-État*.

² *Id.*, *Litanies du Tiers-État*.

cussed publicly. It was the first time such common talk had taken place. The bourgeois discovered that the peasant was more intelligent than he thought. . . . The peasants, roused to the idea of a common interest, became aware that they were numerous and strong, and received from the bourgeois a dim consciousness of their rights.”¹ “What is the Third Estate?” “The nursing father of the State and its most generous defender.” “Who are you?” “A *manant*.” “What is a *manant*?” “A man, a citizen, a member of the Third Estate.”² Henceforward the *manant* could not be set aside, and as we shall see, the fear of the people became a powerful influence in the deliberations of the National Assembly.

These two tendencies : towards a bourgeois representation in the States-General on the one hand, and towards the self-assertion of the people on the other, are well illustrated by the elections of Paris.

Special instructions were issued for the capital. Too large to be included in any *bailliage*, Paris was allowed six hundred electors to choose her forty deputies : ten for the clergy, ten for the nobles, and twenty for the Third Estate. The letters of convocation were not sent to Paris so soon as to the

¹ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique de la révolution française*, p. 30.

² B. M. P., Tiers-État, R. 48, *Catéchisme du Tiers-État*.

rest of France, and they contained restrictions in the qualifications of voters peculiar to the capital.

Whether because the poor of the capital were considered more dangerous than those elsewhere or whether from the old mistrust and hatred of the great city, the king's letters sent out on the 13th of April required from Parisians of the Third Estate—in addition to the ordinary qualifications—only one of the following conditions ; proof that they held an official post, had graduated in the University, were regularly employed, possessed a *lettre de maîtrise*, or had paid a capitation tax of six livres.¹ Out of five hundred thousand commoners only from forty to fifty thousand were qualified. This fact has excited indignation among historians but does not seem to have caused much comment at the time. The *bourgeoisie* were secure, and that was what Paris most cared for.

For administrative purposes Paris was divided in three different ways : by the church into parishes, by the Châtelet into twenty departments and by the Hôtel de Ville² into sixteen *quartiers*.

¹ *Règlement du 13 avril, 1789*, in Chassin, Ch.-L., *Les élections et les cahiers de Paris en 1789*, vol. i. p. 132. A *lettre de maîtrise* proved that its holder had been admitted a master in some trade ; *capitation* was a tax levied on every subject, but varying in amount according to his position.

² The Châtelet, an old fortress on the north of the Seine, was the headquarters of the police of Paris and represented the Crown. The Hôtel de Ville, on the Place de Grève, represented all that was left of the old civic life of the capital.

and it was arranged that the voting should be conducted on these lines. In Paris each Order had to choose electors as well as deputies. Accordingly the clergy were summoned to draw up their *cahiers* by parishes, although they voted, and they only, in a single general assembly. The nobles were called to certain buildings—libraries, palaces, and the like—in the twenty departments of Paris, and for the Third Estate meeting-places were appointed in the sixteen *quartiers*.

It was found, however, that the population of each *quartier* was too large to admit of its meeting in one building. The Hôtel de Ville therefore divided the sixteen *quartiers* into sixty districts and chose a meeting-place for each. These meeting-places were almost without exception the naves of churches, whether parochial or attached to a convent. From this arrangement arose the districts which became famous in the history of the Revolution, under names which often strike one as anomalous. The opulent citizens known as the *Filles de Saint Thomas*, for example, were so called because their district met in the convent chapel attached to that Order.

Official Paris was very busy during the days that followed April the 13th. To the Châtelet were entrusted the arrangements for the assemblies of the two upper Orders, to the Hôtel de Ville those for

the Third Estate. The clergy and nobles were convoked for the 20th, the Commons for the 21st of the month, and on the 23rd the newly-chosen electors were to meet in the Archbishop's palace to compile the general *cahiers* for each Order and to elect the deputies. From the national archives at Paris we learn curious details regarding the preparations made. We are told the expense of lighting and cleaning the buildings set apart for the assemblies of the nobles, the price of the wine—mostly *vin ordinaire*—of the butter, bread, tongues of coffee, and sausages which they consumed at their all-day sitting; what it cost to hire tables, chairs and hangings, and to supply paper and ink.¹

The twentieth of April came. Special detachments of the city troops had been told off to keep guard at the door of the meeting-places, to hold back the crowd and secure free access for the carriages of voters. There was fear of disturbance, and constant communication was kept up between the officials of the Châtelet and Versailles. But at four o'clock on the eventful day M. de Crosne, Lieutenant-General of Police, could report: "Order continues to reign outside the assemblies; it is impossible to know what is taking place within."²

The 21st passed as quietly. "I was in Paris," writes Dumont in his recollections of Mirabeau

¹ *Archives nationales*, Paris, F¹.

² *Id.* BA 61.



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Vom de M M les Deputes de la ville de Paris

e National

pour faire entrer dans la librairie publique
Sous l'inspiration de ces principes

la Commission
de la Bibliothèque Nationale
a été chargée de dresser une liste des ouvrages
à acquérir pour la Bibliothèque Nationale.

1	Knicker	Wetmore	1000
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"during the meetings of the districts for the appointment of electors. In many districts there was difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of persons. The citizens of Paris, surprised by the novelty of the occasion and rather alarmed by the presence of sentinels at the doors of the assemblies, remained at home out of danger, and determined to stay there until the first few days had passed."¹

As a result, only some eleven thousand seven hundred citizens out of the forty to fifty thousand qualified, recorded their votes. Indifference, however, did not last long, nor was it universal. "Long before the hour," wrote Bailly, afterwards Mayor of Paris, "voters grouped themselves near the churches discussing the great question of vote by head or by order. . . . When I found myself in the assembly of my district I felt myself breathing a different air. To count for something in politics was a new sensation. Hitherto we had been bourgeois, now we were citizens. We had the right to elect, to draw up statements of our demands. It was a privilege obtained for the first time for a century and a half, and it was a privilege granted to an enlightened generation." The enthusiasm, he tells us, was such in his district—that of the Feuillants—"that it was difficult to get to the work of drawing up the *cahier*, because of the deputations which came from other

¹ Dumont, Étienne, *Récollections de Mirabeau*, p. 32.

districts to express their satisfaction and high hopes.”¹

But over and above the enthusiasm of the moment, or want of enthusiasm, over and above mere numbers, there remained as an abiding influence in Paris the mechanism employed for the elections. It was an influence which told both for the predominance of the *bourgeoisie* and for the self-assertion of the lower classes.

The division of Paris into districts was at the moment a mere matter of convenience. It very soon became an important factor in the progress of the Revolution. The *quartiers* had been large and loosely organised, the districts were compact. In each district the summons to vote necessitated an acknowledged centre, while the drawing up of its *cahier* virtually created a central committee. The district became a powerful organ in the hands of competent men. Of such men, or, at least, of men who believed themselves such, there was abundance in Paris.

At the same time the existence of the district, and of its successor, the section, became an appeal to the self-importance of the lower classes. It perpetuated their sense of citizenship, gave them an authority to which they could apply in difficulty, and formed a rallying point for any agitation. The

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 9 and 18.

effect of all this on the Revolution was amply shown by later events.

On April 23rd the electors of the three Estates met in the Archbishop's Palace lying to the north of Notre Dame. The bells of the cathedral rang out at seven and again at nine to summon the electors to a solemn mass. From mass they passed to the great hall of the Archiepiscopal Palace. They were accompanied by an official procession from the Châtelet and the hall was crowded with spectators, "among them some young and pretty women," says Hardy, the king's librarian.¹

After the official business of electing presidents and secretaries, the first duty of each Order was to prepare a general *cahier* from the many drawn up by the clergy, nobles, and districts of Paris. It was no slight task and was increased by the anxiety of the authorities to give the citizens every opportunity to express their wishes. Both at the Châtelet and at the Hôtel de Ville great chests had been placed into which anyone might put his complaint or petition. These were opened each night and the petitions catalogued and sent to the electors, and a curious collection they made. There were requests that nobles might be made to pay their bills within the year; that carriages should be forbidden to drive in streets which were only nine feet wide; that

¹ Hardy, *Mes loisirs ou journal d'événements*.

cabriolets, those dangerous rapid vehicles so hated by the pedestrian, should be taxed six hundred livres a year; that patients in hospitals might be allowed to see their friends and clergy.¹

Neither here nor elsewhere did the people rise to general ideas unless instructed by the *bourgeoisie*.

It was the 29th of April before the electors were ready to begin the work of editing the *cahiers*, and the opening of the States-General, again deferred, was fixed for the 4th of May. It was clear that the Paris deputies could not be present unless precedent and the king's *règlements* were boldly laid aside, and the deputies chosen before the *cahiers* were revised and drawn up in final form. But the proposal to do this was negatived by a large majority. The *cahiers* contained the powers conferred on the deputies, and no man, it was urged, ought to accept the responsibilities of a deputy until he knew what those powers and obligations would be—a deputy, it was maintained, could not appear in the States-General without his *cahier*, which was also his mandate.²

Not until the 10th of May at 10 o'clock at night

¹ Chassin, Ch.-L., *Les élections et les cahiers de Paris*, vol. i. p. 163. See this book for all details on Paris elections. An *affiche* giving notice of these chests exists in the Bib. Carnavalet, Paris.

² Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux de l'assemblée des électeurs*, vol. i. p. 20.

was the *cahier* of the Third Estate finally read and approved, and on the 12th the voting began; it lasted until May 19th. The first man chosen was Bailly, a member of five Academies, afterwards chosen first President of the National Assembly and first Mayor of Paris; the last was the Abbé Sieyès, author of the pamphlet which asked the famous question, "What is the Third Estate?" and gave the still more famous answer, "Everything."

Paris was now keenly interested in the election of her deputies. The whole of Paris, we are told, awaited the result of each vote with an anxiety that was almost alarming.¹ Nearly a month had passed since the citizens had sallied forth, some full of enthusiasm, but others timid and uncertain, to choose their electors. Timidity and uncertainty were gone now. The opening of the States-General had already taken place; great questions were waiting to be decided. The desire to be chosen was intense; it was so great a thing to be a deputy in this States-General that was to give France a Constitution, and "who would not wish to see himself one of the instruments of the general felicity?"² So keen was the desire to co-operate in the great task France had set herself that on the 10th of May, before the voting had begun, the

¹ Lally-Tollendal, Comte de, *Mémoires*, p. 11.

² Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 59.

Assembly of Electors resolved that they would continue to meet so long as the States-General lasted, in order to keep up a correspondence with the deputies.

This resolution had important results. It placed the States-General in a peculiar attitude to Paris. It subjected the deputies to criticism and supervision from an independent, even if unauthorised, political body ; and in so far it justified the fears of those who had warned Necker against Versailles as the meeting-place for the States-General, on the ground that the capital was bound to exercise an undue influence on the deliberations of the deputies.

But besides this, it provided the districts with a central authority, and thus consolidated their power. It was the first step in a long line of events which for good or evil made Paris the arbiter of France.

On the 21st of May her deputies left for Versailles.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL.



MEDAL STRUCK FOR THE OPENING
OF THE STATES-GENERAL.

WHEN Louis on December 27th made the proposals contained in the *Résultat du Conseil* he added that never would he allow the slightest prejudice to the honorary prerogatives of the upper Orders. Accordingly all arrangements for the opening of the States-

General were made on the plan of what had happened more than a hundred and seventy years ago.

On Saturday, the 2nd of May, the king held a reception for the deputies of the States-General. The clergy were summoned at eleven in the morning and the nobles at one. They wore the rich robes and dress of their Orders,¹ and were received

¹ See B. M. P., *États-Généraux*, F.R. 45, *Récit des séances des députés des communs* for curious details.

in the king's own cabinet, the doors of which were flung wide open on their entrance.

The Third Estate was summoned at four in the afternoon. Like the other Orders it was told to assemble in the Salon d'Hercule, but unlike the nobles and clergy its deputies were unfamiliar with the palace and there was little comfort in the arrangements made for them. They had to wait long in the great Salon d'Hercule, where the Grand Master of Ceremonies arranged them in the order of their *bailliages*, and when at last they issued forth they were received, not in the king's cabinet, but in the outer and more formal *chambre de parade*; the doors of the chamber were only half opened to admit them, and their dress was a striking contrast to that of the Orders which had preceded them. Many among the Third Estate were in every sense equals of nobles, and to be obliged to appear in a plain black cloak, coat, and knee-breeches, in muslin bands, long hair and three-cornered black hat without feather or ribbon, in fact, with all the marks of a subordinate class, seemed an insult to men who now claimed sovereign rights.¹ But the public thronged the State apartments of the palace to welcome and congratulate the deputies of the people as they passed to the

¹ Bailly, though recording the general dislike to the dress of the Third Estate, considered it a suitable and dignified badge of office. *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 69.

king, and this was compensation. Annoyed and discontented though many were, they agreed not to murmur. "Their first introduction to a good prince must not be complaint . . . and after all they were there for greater things than to remark by which staircase and which rooms the Grand Master of Ceremonies made them pass."¹

On Monday the 4th of May took place the religious ceremony, the procession from the church of Notre Dame to the church of Saint Louis. From the previous Friday the king's heralds, dressed in velvet embroidered with fleurs-de-lys, and mounted on magnificent white horses, had been seen riding about Versailles proclaiming at every cross-road the opening of the States-General. They were accompanied by troops of the king's household and by the trumpeters of the *Grande Écurie*.²

Versailles was, indeed, in great excitement; so also was Paris. True, its deputies could not take part in the opening ceremony, but the citizens were there in numbers. Many persons left the capital on Sunday afternoon and spent the night in their carriages. The road between Paris and Versailles was thronged.

The king was anxious not, so far as we are told, about the action of the States-General, but about

¹ *Courier de Provence*, No. I. (*États-Généraux*).

² D'Hézacques, C. A., *Souvenirs d'un page de la cour de Louis XVI.*, p. 287.

the weather, for it rained in the night and rain would interfere with the rich display. But sunshine came with daylight and the king's anxiety was laid to rest. The streets of the royal town through which the procession was to pass were hung with carpets, the squares with the finest Gobelin tapestries, and the pavements laid with sand. On one side of the streets stood the Garde Françaises, on the other the Suisses. Immense crowds pressed behind the soldiers, and gaily dressed women filled the windows.¹

The deputies assembled early in the church of Notre Dame de Versailles, which stands a little to the east of the Place d'Armes, and at ten o'clock the royal procession left the palace. As soon as the Royal Family arrived at the church the *Vierge* Creator was sung, each deputy received a torch, and a procession was formed which was to cross Versailles to the church of Saint Louis in the opposite quarter of the town. The nobles arranged themselves by *bailliages*, the clergy did the same and were careful to observe distinctions of rank, but the Third Estate asked and obtained leave to walk "in brotherly fashion in the order which chance allotted them."² Except for the town-clergy and some household troops the deputies

¹ *Le Point du Jour*, vol. i. p. 37.

² David, J. L., *États-Généraux de 1789*, p. 7, an interesting fragment written by the painter David.—Bib. nat.

the Third Estate, as being the least important, headed the procession. They walked four in a line, two and two on either side of the street. After them came the deputies of the nobles, then those of the lower clergy, the musicians of the royal chapel, the prelates—deputies of the higher clergy—and immediately preceding the king, the Host. The king walked alone; the queen, the princesses, ladies and gentlemen of the court, and household troops closed the procession.

If the order of this, the last great procession of the old regime, was typical of old ideas, the welcome accorded it was significant of new. "All along the route," says David, "Louis XVI. received flattering proofs of the attachment of his people," but the honour done him was as nothing compared with that done to the Third Estate. The king walked on unobservant, but Marie-Antoinette was sensitive and anxious. Intensely unpopular owing to her recklessness and love of gaiety rather than to any graver fault, she had come to dislike facing the people, and her heart was sad over her little son, whose only part in the pageant was to lie on cushions in the balcony of the *Petite Écurie* and see the procession. But she proudly determined to look her best, took special care about her dress, and when the people saw her enter the church of Notre Dame "how she might have been loved,"

they said, "had she only wished it."¹ During the procession a harsher saying greeted her. The Duc d'Orléans, cousin of the king, had been a Duc de Chartres one of the queen's associates in the early days of the reign. He had, however, long broken off from Versailles, was considered the leader of the opposition to the Crown, and was always ready to cater for popularity at the expense of the king. He had been chosen a representative of the nobles, and had taken his place among the deputies instead of among the princes of the blood, and was loudly cheered by the populace. Just as Marie-Antoinette was nearing the church of Saint Louis, a woman cried out, "Long live the Duc d'Orléans!" It was meant as an insult and as a menace to the throne, and as such the queen understood it.

Presently, in exultant mood, the Third Estate arrived at the church which no French sovereign had entered before,² for it belonged to the people's parish—the king entered now preceded by his commons. The nave of the church was arranged to receive the deputies and court. At the chancel end an altar had been erected, and at the other end facing the altar were the seats for the king and court. Between the king's platform and the altar

¹ *Le Point du Jour* du 5 mai.

² *Le Roi, Histoire de Versailles*, ii. p. 337.

two long rows of benches opposite each other were arranged, one on the right for the clergy, the other on the left for the nobles, while the seats intended for the Third Estate were in the side aisles, behind the clergy and nobles.

The commons, however, arriving first, walked up the nave and took their places in the centre rows, leaving seats for the clergy and nobility at the end nearest the throne. As they did so the nobles entered the church and suddenly stood still. Just at this moment a brilliant apparition appeared in the midst of the sombre throng. It was M. le Marquis de Dreux-Brézé, Grand Master of Ceremonies, in a mantle glittering with gold and precious stones, fingers covered with diamonds, feathers of startling whiteness on his head.

"How now, gentlemen?" he asked, "are these your places? Move out, if you please." "And who, sir, may you be, to speak thus to the deputies of the French nation?" asked M. de Larevellière-Lépeaux, a deputy from Anjou. The young man drew himself up and raised his voice. "I," said he, "am the Grand Master of Ceremonies." "And where then, Monsieur the Grand Master of Ceremonies, are the places reserved for us?" "That, sir, is a matter of course, the benches on the two side aisles." "And who is to occupy those on the two sides of the centre of the nave?" "The clergy

on the right and the nobles on the left." "And so, Monsieur the Grand Master of Ceremonies, you place the deputies of the nation behind two small privileged bodies." "I follow the order of 1614" was the reply. "What!" exclaimed the other "have you been so unobservant of the progress of ideas as not to know that the States-General of 1614 count for nothing here?"¹

While the deputy and the Grand Master of Ceremonies wrangled, the king was kept waiting at the door of the church; for there was no room for aristocracy or royalty so long as the commons sat where they were. Their temper, happily, was conciliatory; when they understood what was happening they retired and took their much protesting member with them.

The deputies had come to hear a sermon which was to be preached by M. de la Fare, Bishop of Nancy. He was chosen as a safe man who would not lower the prestige of the Crown nor yet offend the susceptibilities of the Third Estate, but his task was difficult, and all unwittingly he played a Balaam's part. He described the disorder in the country, the tyranny of taxation, the misery of the poor, and the poverty of the agriculturists, and then turning to the king, he exclaimed, "and it is in the name of a good king, of a just monarch, and one

¹ Larevellière-Lépeaux, de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 67. Paris, 1873.

alive to the needs of his people that these things are done," while to the deputies he cried, "France ! thy will is enough."¹

Kind-hearted impotence was imputed to the king and an informed will to the States-General ; to do so might be just, but it was hardly politic.

Early next morning the deputies of the Third Estate made their way to the Salle des Menus-Plaisirs of the king. The hall lay between the Avenue de Paris and the Rue des Chantiers, and was entered either from the Avenue de Paris and the Hôtel des Menus-Plaisirs, of which it was a part, or by a kind of covered passage from the Rue des Chantiers. By this narrow entrance the deputies of the Third Estate were to enter, and here they stood crowded and wet—for the rain made its way through the wooden roof—while one by one they were called by name to be ushered into the hall with the others of their *bailliage*. "Truly," writes Mirabeau, "the spectacle resembled a merchant's exchange rather than the vestibule of the National Assembly."² Meantime the deputies of the clergy and of the nobles were admitted by the Avenue de Paris and the private entrance of the king. At the upper end of the superbly decorated hall was the platform and dais for the king and

¹ *Courier de Provence*, No. I. (*États-Généraux*).

² *Id.*, No. II.

court; on benches running alongside the building sat the two upper Orders facing each other, and at the end of the hall and opposite the throne was ranged the Third Estate. All round, on raised benches and in the galleries, was a brilliant company of spectators.

When the king entered there was hearty cheering. The deputies were loyal, whatever the citizens of Versailles might be. With Louis was Marie-Antoinette and at her entrance the cheering ceased. "I tried," wrote a foreigner who was present, "to induce those near me to raise a shout, but in vain."¹ Marie-Antoinette was not daunted. The king, seated and covered according to etiquette, was about to speak. The audience rose and with it the queen. The king turned to her and asked her to remain seated. She chose to identify herself with her husband's subjects and acknowledging his courtesy by a deep reverence listened to the king's address standing, as did they.

Louis spoke well; he entered into no details, but prayed the deputies to use wisdom and moderation in their deliberations. He declared the state of finance to be the occasion of the Assembly, but gave as an additional reason the desirability of directing wisely the inordinate desire for innovation which had seized upon the country, and he concluded by a promise which from his own narrow point of view he

¹ Morris, Governor, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 243.

faithfully kept. "All that one can expect from the tenderest interest in the public good, all that one can ask from a sovereign, the first friend of his people, you may hope from my sentiments."¹

As Louis ended, the Chancellor announced that His Majesty permitted his two first Orders to replace their hats, and immediately, without permission, the Third Estate covered also.²

The king's speech was followed by one from Barentin, Keeper of the Seals, of which no one heard a word, and then Necker rose. To his speech all listened eagerly, listening less to what he said than for what he did not say. "His speech," writes a contemporary, "full of small details, appeared excessively long,"—it lasted three hours,—“and fatigued every one.”³ The extreme care taken by the minister to wound no party only resulted in his satisfying none, and in exciting against himself a general sense of irritation. Neither he nor the Keeper of the Seals gave any deliverance on the great question of vote by Order or by head. This question the States-General must settle for themselves.

At five o'clock the Assembly broke up. The States-General were open, but the commons were

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 1 seq., *Discours du roi*.

² Under the old regime French nobles were always covered before the king except when he personally addressed them, they him, or when he drank; only valets *sans épée* and *sans manteau* were uncovered.

³ Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 4.

disappointed. The king had reiterated his desire for the good of his subjects, but had given no better security than his 'sentiments'; without vote by head all that the Third Estate had gained was virtually lost. If the two higher Orders could outvote the lower as often as they chose, free elections, enlightened *cahiers*, and double representation were of little good. Necker had disappointed the Third Estate and thrown it back upon itself; the Crown had irritated its susceptibilities. It left the Salle de Menus-Plaisirs determined to fight for its own hand. "Let us hope," said Mirabeau, at the end of his account of the opening of the States-General, "that henceforth the representatives of the nation may be fully alive to the dignity of their position, their mission, their representative character, that they may quit themselves before all Europe as men chosen by a nation which only needs a Constitution to render it the first in the world."¹

¹ *Courier de Provence*, No. II. (*États-Généraux*).

CHAPTER V.

THE STATES-GENERAL.



BAILLY.

AT nine o'clock on the morning of Wednesday the 6th of May the deputies of the States-General met to begin work. Very early that morning the king had issued an order bidding the deputies meet in the "place appointed for their use."¹ Now there was only one place which the Third

Estate knew of as appointed for their use—the great hall in which the States-General had been opened the day before. But in the Hôtel des Menus-Plaisirs were two smaller halls intended as guard-rooms for two royal regiments, and these had been prepared as chambers for the clergy and the nobles.² No special

¹ See for this chapter Chérest, A., *La chute de l'ancien régime*, vol. iii. and last half of vol. ii. Also *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii.

² Le Roi, J. A., *Histoire de Versailles*, vol. i. p. 423.

chamber was prepared for the Third Estate, a piece of carelessness on the part of the Crown, which nevertheless invested the Third Estate with a peculiar dignity, since it, and it only, occupied the hall identified in the eyes of the public with the States-General ; the very Salle des États-Généraux.

From this slight vantage ground, backed by the sympathy and confidence of the great mass of the nation, and instructed in its wishes by their *cahiers*, the Third Estate entered on the campaign.

Now, although no two of these *cahiers* were alike either in subject matter or in form, almost all, whether coming from the clergy, the nobles, or the Third Estate, were agreed that the first business of the States-General, before even that of finance, was the business of providing France with a Constitution. "At the beginning of the monarchy," says the *cahier* of the town of Bayonne, "France had a Constitution, but it has suffered many changes, and it is time to set forth once again those fundamental principles, which will best conduce to the welfare of the kingdom."¹

On certain of these principles the *cahiers* of the three Orders were agreed. They all asked that the States-General should meet periodically, that no taxes should be imposed without their consent,

¹On *cahiers* see *Archives parlementaires*, vols. ii.-vii., and also Champion, Edme., *La France d'après les cahiers de 1789*.

and that the liberty of the subject should be respected. Most demanded equal taxation, or assumed it as a foregone conclusion, and very many asked for the establishment of provincial assemblies.

The great questions which separated the two upper Orders from the Third was that of vote by Order or by head, of abolition of feudal rights, and in lesser degree, of the right of citizens of all three Orders without distinction to be admitted to civil, military and ecclesiastical dignities. On these points the *cahiers* of the Third Estate stood a solid phalanx, while those of the clergy and of the nobles were divided.

The Order of the clergy contained within it two distinct classes : *le haut clergé* or dignitaries of the Church who were themselves aristocrats, and the *bas clergé* or parish curés who were born of the people, understood their needs and suffered many of their privations ; men who, whether poor or comparatively well-off, sympathised with the Third Estate rather than with their own Order. It was the first time the *curés* had been admitted into an Order which in former States-General was confined to the *haut clergé*, but now the Crown, anxious to secure the co-operation of the clergy, admitted the *curés* to the First Estate in order to counter-balance the vote of the prelates. The clergy therefore, were

not only divided, but were pitted one against another, and, but for the art and flattery of the prelates, the *curés* would have openly declared themselves in favour of the Third Estate much sooner than they did. Nor were the nobles much happier, since from the very first they had to reckon with a minority avowedly in sympathy with the new ideas. "The commons," says Lally Tollendal, a noble chosen as a Paris deputy, and a moderate Liberal, "had peace in their midst, the clergy and nobles had not."¹

Further, the States-General were to consist of twelve hundred members, three hundred in the clergy, three hundred in the nobles, and six hundred in the Third Estate; but it so happened that the commons had a numerical majority over the two other Orders combined. When the January *règlements* were issued, there was great discontent among the nobles of Brittany, Franche-Comté and Alsace. These provinces were *Pays d'États*, and had always called together their provincial *États*, and there chosen the deputies to the States-General. They now objected to have their provinces broken up into electoral districts, and, rather than sanction innovations to which they were determinedly opposed, preferred to deny themselves representatives. The old nobles of Alsace retired from the contest and allowed country gentlemen of liberal opinions to

¹ Lally-Tollendal, Comte de, *Mémoires*, p. 18.

represent their Order, while the refusal of the nobles of Brittany to send any deputies at all deprived their Order of twenty-one representatives. On the other hand, the admission of the *curés* to the first instead of to the third Order increased the number of representatives born in the Third Estate to eight hundred instead of six.

All these advantages, the union, the numerical strength, the *locale* of the Third Estate, made it the more keen to win in the struggle to obtain vote by head, for this was the vital point—that which would decide for the old regime or for a new. Vote by Order might admit of concessions to the wishes of the people, but it meant the maintenance of the Orders as political entities, and with them a system of privilege, and the submission of the Third Estate to the will of the privileged. Vote by head meant revolution, for it placed every representative on equal terms. The fight must be fought in the arena of the Hôtel and Salle des Menus-Plaisirs, but the country, the court, the ministers and the Crown were all keenly interested. On the side of the Third Estate was the nation, on the side of the privileged the court; the ministers were divided, and the king an uncertain quantity.

The first duty of the States-General was to verify their powers—that is, to show that their election had been made in due form. It was not an important

piece of business, and there seemed no reason why this at least should not be done in common. But on the morning of May the 6th the Third Estate found itself alone in the Salle des Menus-Plaisirs, and by-and-by, about half-past two, heard that the clergy and nobles were in their own chambers and already at work. To yield now was to yield all, and merely technical as was the verification of powers, the Third Estate at once resolved on the course to pursue. "The deputies of the commons," they agreed, "assembled in the place intended to receive the deputies of the three Orders, having been informed that the clergy and the nobility have each retired into their separate chambers in order to proceed to the verification of their powers, have resolved to wait a few days for the privileged Orders to join them." So the Third Estate waited. It chose a Dean, M. Leroux, the oldest deputy present, but it elected no secretary and kept no record of its proceedings. It refused even to open letters addressed to the deputies as *communs*. In twelve days it adopted only two resolutions: one on a merely technical point, the other discarding the court regulations regarding costume.

At this early stage the meetings were open to the public. There were frequently as many or more

¹ Baudouin, *Collection générale des décrets*, vol. i. *Arrêté du 6 mai 1789*. An *arrêt* was a decision come to by a sovereign court or the king's council; an *arrêté*, a resolution taken by a deliberative body.

spectators than deputies, for the seats erected behind the deputies on the opening day had not been removed, and were occupied by eager and admiring crowds. There was very little order kept ; the public had only to step over a form and find itself mingling with the deputies ; the deputies, more ready to speak than to listen, disputed perpetually as to who should enter the tribune and address the Assembly. The Dean alone had any right of control, but the little bell by which he called to order was often quite useless.¹ The Third Estate alone deliberated with open doors, and for this reason also, bulked in the eyes of the populace as the one important Order.

Meantime, the deputies, gathered from every part of France, were becoming known to one another, and clubs and newspapers with political aims were being founded.

The club which began in a little café in Versailles, probably the café Amaury at the corner of the Rue de la Pompe,² had its origin among the Breton deputies, and became the famous Breton Club. "We are here," said the deputies, "as if dropped from the clouds into a land whose ideas are foreign to our own." They felt strange and lonely at Versailles ; and, besides this, their con-

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 100 and 176.

² Aulard, A., *La société des Jacobins*, vol. i. p. iii.

stituents had instructed them to compare *cahier* and to act in unison. Very soon the Breton Club was joined by deputies from elsewhere. "You deputies have an advantage over those of the rest of the kingdom. In the name of the public good, pray you to let them share,"¹ said the messenger sent to ask admission for outsiders, and presently we find Mirabeau, Sieyès, Barnave, Pétion, Robespierre, and others, members of the Breton Club. Thus enlarged and strengthened, the Club undertook a certain definite piece of work—the discussion beforehand of all important subjects to be brought before the States-General. It aimed at guiding the decision of the representatives of France, at being the secret fire of the nation. It was the first and the strongest of the many political clubs of the day and later, as the Jacobin Club, attained a power greater almost than that of the National Assembly itself.

Just as naturally sprang up the first political periodical,² Mirabeau's *Courier de Provence*, which he intended as an account to his constituents of the doings of the States-General. The first number and the second issued on May 6th were called *Le États-Généraux*. On the eighth two *arrêts* of the

¹ See Chérest, A., *La chute de l'ancien régime*, vol. ii. p. 462.

² See on newspapers at that time, Hatin, E., *Bibliographie de la presse périodique*. There were of course both clubs and newspapers before this, but they might not profess political opinions.

King's Council were published. The first suppressed the new journal, the second forbade the printing of any periodical not officially authorised. On the 10th of May appeared the third number of the offending paper under the title of *Lettres à mes Commettants*, since no one, Mirabeau contended, could object to a deputy communicating with his constituents. It was a step towards liberty of the press, but for that and for all else the deputies and the nation waited.

Waiting, however, could not last. Anxious to carry on the struggle courteously, the Third Estate, as we have seen, began by inviting the other Orders to join them and verify in common. The clergy, more conciliatory than the nobles, proposed a Conference, and until it had taken place stopped the work of verification. The nobles continued their verification, but on May 13th declaring it complete and their Order constituted, signified their willingness to confer. For their decision the Third Estate had waited, and on May 18th, after a long debate, it accepted the proposal of the clergy. The clergy then offered to renounce all pecuniary privileges; the nobles followed their example, but only on condition that the Orders deliberated separately.

It was the 23rd of May, at six o'clock in the evening when the delegates chosen from the three Orders met to confer in a hall near that of the Salle

des Menus-Plaisirs. The Conference lasted three days, and on the 27th the result was made known. The nobles insisted on adhering to the old form for the present States-General, saying that the question could be finally decided when the organisation of the next Assembly was discussed; the Third held to its *cahiers*; the clergy came to no decision at all.

The failure of the Conference discomfited the Third Estate. Over three weeks had now passed and nothing was done; it was, however, clear that the clergy were more in favour of union than the nobles; the commons, therefore, immediately on receiving the report of the Conference, sent the clergy an urgent invitation praying them "in the name of the God of peace and in the interests of the nation to join them in the *Salle de l'Assemblée générale*, there to confer as how best to secure the concord which was at the present moment necessary for the public good."¹

So eloquently did Target, the Paris deputy who led the deputation, plead his cause that the *curés* were ready to rise at once and accompany him to the Salle des Menus-Plaisirs. It was a critical moment; if the *curés* rose the Third Estate had triumphed; if they hesitated the older Order might

¹See *Courier de Provence*, *Sixième lettre et seq.*, for conference and efforts of commons at conciliation, also *Le Point du Jour*.

yet prevail. One of the prelates suggested the necessity of deliberation before reply, and Target returned to the hall, there to wait until the answer came. They waited until three in the afternoon, then sent messengers to find out what the clergy meant to do ; the clergy replied that they had not ended their discussion ; the commons answered that they would wait until midnight or longer, but at half-past four a message came to say that no answer would be given until the next day.¹

Before next day the king had interfered. Uneasy lest the prolonged inaction should disappoint the hopes raised by the summoning of the States-General, he ordered the Conference just ended to resume its sittings at six o'clock the next evening in the presence of "my Keeper of the Seals and of Commissioners chosen by me." For the moment the prelates had won.

There was a long and keen debate among the commons on this message from the king. They did not like the appointment of Crown Commissioners to be present at their Conference, and they knew that Barentin, Keeper of the Seals, the minister whose business it had been to make arrangements for the convocation of the States, and in whose official residence the Conference was to take place, held firmly to the old regime. But

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 81.

the sense of loyalty was deep, and out of respect to the king they resolved to obey.¹

On the 30th of May the Conference was resumed. Point by point the nobles disputed the ground, point by point the Third Estate met them, and were very near a victory when the Crown again stepped in with a fresh proposal. This time it came from Necker, who suggested that the Orders should agree to verify separately, and that all difficulties which might arise should be referred to a Commission chosen from the three Orders. If the Commission agreed on any disputed point, well and good; if not, it must be referred to the king, whose decision must be final.

The proposal was a backward step, and although the clergy were willing to accept it and the nobles to consider it, provided they yielded nothing, the Third Estate, sitting inactive in the *Salle des États Généraux*, declined to give any answer until the Conference was over. This was virtually a refusal for until it was settled whether or not the Three Estates would accept the king's proposal, there seemed little good in further parleying, and on June 6th the Conference broke up.

That same day the clergy made an attempt to force the Third Estate into action. They sent the

¹ See Baudouin, *Coll. gén. des décrets. Arrêté du 29 mai*. Baudouin was printer to the National Assembly, and his collection of decrees, etc., is recognised as the authentic one.

Bishop of Nîmes to represent the misery and famine from which the people were suffering while their representatives were idling at Versailles, and suggested that a Commission should be set on foot *in each Order* to enquire into the causes of, and remedies for this distress. It was a plea to which the Third Estate was keenly alive, but it saw the danger to which it was exposed—the danger of taking any active step as a single Order. More important than the suffering of France was the necessity to guard the principles she held dearest. “We, too,” was the answer, “are moved even to tears by the suffering of the people, and for this reason we pray you, we conjure you to join us in the common hall, and advise with us on the public good.”¹

With this incident the waiting period of the States-General ended. On June 10th Bailly, then Dean of the Third Estate, announced that, the Conference being closed, the time was come to deliberate on the king’s proposal. At this Mirabeau, who had on the 6th of May urged the policy of inaction, rose and said that that policy must now end. Whereupon the Abbé Sieyès moved that the commons could not longer wait for the privileged classes without betraying the trust of their constituents; that a full account be sent to the king

¹ *Courier de Provence, Neuvième lettre.*

of their "long and vain efforts to bring the privileged to accede to the true principles"; that a last effort be made to induce them to verify in common but that this last effort made, the commons hold themselves, in case of the refusal of the privileged Orders, free to act.

On the 11th there was a pause; it was the feast of the Fête-Dieu, and the Chambers did not sit but on the morning of the 12th messages embodying this motion were sent to the privileged Orders, and for the last time, the Third Estate waited. All day long it waited; it drew up its address to the king, it decided henceforth to keep minutes of its proceedings; but not until seven o'clock, when the evening sitting opened, did it fulfil its threat, and call upon the deputies of the three Orders to verify their powers. Neither those of the nobles nor of the clergy were there to reply; the members of the Third Estate presented themselves alone, and walking up to the bureau one by one, laid down their credentials.

Next day three *curés* from the province of Poitou answered the summons. That afternoon, Bailly carrying the address to the king, met the Keeper of the Seals, who in sarcastic tones complimented him on "the great conquest you have just made." "Monsieur," replied the Dean, "it will be followed by others," and he was right. Six other *curés*

joined next day, and seven two days later, making nineteen in all.¹

By the afternoon of June 15th the verification of the powers of the Third Estate was completed, and there only remained one more point to decide before the Assembly was ready for work. Under what name was it to constitute itself? Clearly it was not the States-General;—nineteen *curés* could not be called the Order of the clergy, and of nobles there were none. It was not an Assembly of the Estates of the realm.

Various titles were suggested, all of which were carefully framed not to express too much. The Abbé Sieyès proposed "Representatives of the Nation known or verified"; Mounier, the "Legitimate Assembly of the Representatives of the Nation acting in the absence of the Minority," a title more accurate than manageable, and rejected as both clumsy and undignified. Others proposed variants on the same theme such as "Representatives of twenty-five million men," and lastly, Mirabeau, "Representatives of the French people." To English ears that title is both dignified and adequate, but to a Frenchman in 1789, the word "people" suggested only subservience, poverty and ignorance—in fact, the *manant* as opposed to the *bourgeois*, and the deputies objected. Mirabeau taunted them

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 140.

with their objection. "I persevere in my motion," he cried, "and in the title *peuple français*: it is just because the name of people is not sufficiently respected in France, because it presents an idea which pride takes fright and vanity is revolted . . . that we, gentlemen, should take the name, and not only raise but ennoble it, that we should make it henceforth respected by ministers and cherished in every heart. Were it not ours, we ought to choose it and regard it as a precious opportunity for serving this people whom we represent, whose rights we defend, and from whom we have received our own, and yet for whom we seem to blush."¹ In spite of his eloquence, Mirabeau's title was rejected and that of "National Assembly" was adopted as satisfying the larger number of the deputies.

It was between eight and nine in the evening before the discussion was ended, but the Assembly was eager to constitute itself; there were fears lest the Crown, disquieted by the proceedings of the commons, might "interfere and stifle in its cradle a power before which, if left alone, the Crown itself might soon prove helpless." On the other hand the deputies were about to take a most serious step and many thought the hour unfitting. It was late and all were not present. Bailly describes the

¹ *Courier de Provence, Onzième lettre.*

scene. A long table was stretched across the hall ; behind it sat the Dean ; before him a crowd of some three hundred men, conspicuous among whom were the Breton deputies, demanding the vote there and then ; behind him a smaller but yet more clamorous group insistent on delay. Bailly sat still. One by one the more tumultuous members left the hall, hurling reproaches at the Dean as they departed, and letting in an angry gust of wind, for the night was as disturbed as were the deputies. At length quiet was restored, and in the early hours of the morning a resolution was adopted to adjourn the sitting until day.¹

On the 17th of June, at one o'clock in the afternoon, the Third Estate of the States-General constituted itself the National Assembly. The hall, crowded with courtiers and with citizens who had hurried out from Paris, resounded with cries of "Long live the king and the National Assembly !" Then, in the midst of profound silence, the deputies rose and swore to obey the dictates of their *cahiers* ; to give France a Constitution, and to carry out reforms. That evening the popular enthusiasm in Paris was intense.

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 151.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KING AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.



EMBLEM OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY.

THE struggle which resulted in the substitution of a National Assembly for the ancient States-General cost France some illusions. One was that the king, guided by the "goodness of his heart," would side with the Third Estate. "The idea," says

M. Champion, "that Louis XVI. could take part with the two First Orders against the Third had not entered into the mind of the commons who for centuries had regarded the king as the adversary of the privileged."¹ The Third Estate believed that in rising, as it did, against privilege, despotism, and the remains of feudalism

¹ Brette, A., *Le jeu de paume*. Introduction par. E. Champion.

it had its king with it, and was, in fact, only obeying its sovereign. "The nation," wrote the painter David, no flatterer of princes, "sees in the States-General the beginning of hope; the end of disquietude. Their convocation will place Louis XVI. on the level of those beloved princes whose name even to-day is never pronounced but with the tenderness and veneration of filial piety."¹

"De Louis notre grand Monarque,
Ah! le grand cœur!
Il veut, il fait, il nous le marque
Notre bonheur.

Défendons, aimons, avec zèle,
Servons l'État
Qu'à Louis soit toujours fidèle
Le Tiers État."²

Even more significant are the words at the end of an inflammatory address issued to the people of Paris. "Uphold your rights, I repeat it, the Clergy, the Nobles, the Magistrates are against you. Do you further the views of a good monarch, join with the king," and the *cahier* of the Third Estate of Paris closed with the proposal that the Bastille should be destroyed, and a simple monument erected on its place, with the inscription, "To Louis XVI., king of a free people."³

Louis XVI. believed himself to be an enlightened

¹ David, *Les États-Généraux*. ² B. M. P. Chansons, F. R. 455.

³ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. v. p. 298.

and liberal-minded monarch. He never urged his own pleasure or convenience as a reason against economy ; he was always ready to send help when calamity occurred ; he had freed his serfs, modified criminal procedure, granted civil rights to Protestants, and he had had Turgot and Necker as his ministers. But he had none of the imagination essential to a ruler in difficult times ; he did not know that he was living in a new France that demanded new conditions, and he always stopped short just when he should have gone forward. In 1776 he had deserted Turgot, and in 1781 Necker at the critical moment, and now, having called together the States-General and raised the hopes of France to the highest pitch, he deserted his people.

Louis' reception of the deputies of the Third Estate had caused uneasiness, but his speech on the 5th of May was the first serious disillusion. In it he addressed his people in the old tones, congratulated himself on being surrounded "by the representatives of a nation he felt honoured in commanding," "all that the public good required might be expected from his *sentiments*."¹ There was no revolution here, such as that proposed by the *Résultat du Conseil*, and the Third Estate was disappointed. But it blamed the king's advisers ; it was scrupulously respectful, and hoped on. In

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. viii. p. 1 seq. *Discours du roi le 5 mai 1789.*

addresses to the king, as remarkable for their loyalty as for their independence, it explained each step it took, and it sought to have free access to his person, because it trusted him rather than his ministers.

To all this Louis replied by an obstinate adherence to old forms and rigid etiquette. On the 29th of May the deputies of the Third Estate sent the king their formal address of thanks for the Convocation of the States-General, and explained that they would long before have rendered their homage had not the nobles put obstacles in the way of the verification of their powers. At the same time they declared themselves certain that under a prince who desired to be the restorer of French liberty the freedom of a national assembly could not be in danger.¹

This address Bailly, as Dean, was commissioned to carry to the king. But the king was going to the hunt and could not receive him, and Barentin, whose business it was to attend to such matters, could not be found; obstacle after obstacle arose to hinder Bailly from presenting the address. The commons were patient, for the little Dauphin was very ill, but when Bailly heard that the two upper Orders had free access to the king, he went to Barentin and demanded an explanation. It was found in the ceremonial to be employed.

"There is no wish," said Barentin, "to wound the

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 60, *Adresse au roi*.

Third Estate by insisting on the old forms ; still the old forms have existed from time immemorial and supposing the king should desire them?

"And supposing," retorted Bailly, "twenty-five millions of men should *not* desire them, what means will you take to enforce them? . . . The king is good and just ; I am not afraid of the king, but of what may be suggested to him."¹ For this fear Barentin confessed there was occasion. The other Orders, tenacious of their honorary privileges; wished to have a difference made between the manner of their reception and that of the Third Estate. But the day was past when the commons could be asked to kneel in addressing their sovereign, and the difficulty was what to suggest instead. Bailly cut short the interview by declaring that the commons would suffer no difference, however slight.

When on June 10th the deputies of the Third Estate next addressed their sovereign a slight change was noticeable in their tone. On this occasion they explained why it was that they could not accept his last proposal, and why they now meant to verify their powers. They threw the responsibility on the nobles, but they told the king that the difficulties would have been less had he granted their desire of free access to his person, and himself listened to what they had to say.

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 104 seq.

With the decision of June 17th, what had been conflict between the Orders became conflict between the newly constituted Assembly and the Crown. For the first time the king realised that the old regime was in danger, that he stood on the brink of an abyss.¹ Necker had assured him of the loyalty of the Third Estate, and the Third Estate had taken a step which many of its own members thought too bold. It had constituted itself a National Assembly, it had taken a solemn oath "to fulfil with zeal and fidelity the duties with which it was charged," and it had done these things irrespective of the king. It had even begun to legislate without his sanction; nay, more, in its very first legislative act it had used the language hitherto sacred to the king. Hitherto laws had been "decreed" in the royal councils alone, now they were "decreed" in the Assembly of the Nation. This was in itself a reversal of the old regime.

There was, of course, consternation at the court, and a general consensus of opinion that the king must take some step. What it should be Louis was by no means clear. The nobles sent him an address protesting loyalty, the court party urged that come what would the bulwark of the old regime, the separation of the Three Orders for political as for social purposes must be maintained. To settle what should

¹ Barentin, *Mémoire autographe*, p. 169.

be done a Council was called for Friday, the 19th of June.

Meantime the National Assembly had already by its first decree guarded itself against dissolution. Without the will of the nation no taxes, the king himself had said, could be imposed. All existing taxes were, therefore, argued the Assembly, illegal but since the Assembly was bound by its *cahier* to settle the basis of the Constitution in concert with the king before proceeding to reform finance and since the government could not go on without money, the new Assembly on June 17th decreed that the taxes should continue to be raised as usual *so long as the present Assembly should sit*. As there was not supposed to be enough money in the Treasury to last over July, the National Assembly had made its continuance a national necessity.

On the eighteenth of June Barentin and Necke went to consult with the king at the little palace of Marly, where the court had retired after the death of the Dauphin. Barentin was resolved to keep the Orders separate, and even went so far as to ask the king to forbid the Estates to meet. "Your Majesty must give orders that no Estate meets to-morrow," he wrote to Louis on the 19th; "it

¹ Baudouin, *Collection générale des décrets*. The decrees hereafter referred to are to be found in this collection arranged according to date.

important to prevent what might happen.”¹ Necker, though angry with the Third Estate for its self-assertion, wished to effect a reconciliation. He suggested that the three Orders should deliberate together on general topics—that is, on the constitution, on finance, and the organisation of future States-General, and separately on matters affecting their own Orders; he also proposed that the king should open military and civil honours to merit of whatever rank.

On Friday the 19th of June, at mid-day, the Council met.² The resolution passed by the Third Estate on the 17th was read and condemned. Necker’s proposals were discussed and handed over to a secretary to be drawn up in proper form and decided on next day. A *Séance royale*, that is a meeting of all the Orders in which the king himself would take part, was arranged for the 22nd, and in accordance with Barentin’s suggestion, instructions were sent to the Presidents of each Order not to meet until then. At four o’clock the Council broke up to meet next day at five.

That same evening, between five and six, there was unusual commotion in the Avenue de Paris.

¹ *Lettres de Barentin au roi du 25 avril au 11 juillet 1789*—Arch. nat., Paris, K. 679—in which Barentin sends Louis a daily report on the doings of the Orders.

² On the Councils see Brette, A., *Le serment du jeu de paume*; Barentin, *Mémoire autographe*; and Chérest, A., *La chute de l’ancien régime*, vol. iii. p. 186 seq.

Bailly, dining with his brother in a house just opposite the Salle des Menus-Plaisirs, heard the shouts and rose to find out the cause. The majority of the clergy, and among them the Archbishops of Bordeaux and Vienne and the Bishop of Chartres had decided to join the Third Estate. The sitting had broken up, and the people were cheering and embracing those in the majority, hooting and roughly using those who were not.¹ "That night," says a contemporary writer, "intrigue did its worst; princes, prelates, nobles, the Parlement of Paris, the royal advisers, surrounded, circumvented and deceived the king, hardening him against the people."² The Parlement sent a deputation insisting on his dissolving the States-General and promising to adhere to any financial measure he might deem necessary. The bishops met in the church of Notre Dame de Versailles, drew up a protest against their offending brethren, and at ten o'clock at night carried it to the king; the aged Archbishop of Paris threw himself on his knees before his sovereign, and prayed him to save the State and religion by preventing, at any cost, the union of the clergy with the Third Estate.³ Saturday's Council promised to be stormy enough.

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 178.

² *Revue de la Révolution*, vol. 13, Sept. 1888—*Ouverture des États Généraux de 1789, Lettres de Boullé*.

³ Cp. Aulard, A., *Études et leçons de la révolution française*, p. 56 and Brette, A., *Le serment du jeu de paume*.

But before the Council met at Marly a second decisive step was taken at Versailles. Early on the morning of the twentieth a certain Chevalier de Pange, a gentleman given to attending the sittings of the Third Estate, made his way to the Salle des États and found it closed. Thence he repaired to Bailly and told him the disquieting news. Bailly sent to the hall, learned that it was surrounded by the *Gardes Françaises*, and that a placard on the door informed the deputies that the "king, having resolved to hold a *Séance royale* on the 22nd, the three halls used by the three Orders would be closed until then because of necessary preparations."¹

Almost immediately after, Bailly received an order to the same effect from the Grand Master of Ceremonies, with a polite post-script asking for the names of the secretaries, so that they might be authorised to remove their papers from the hall.

Bailly sent for the two secretaries of the Third Estate,—the lawyer Camus and M. Pison de Galland,—and consulted with them. All three read the order as an attempt to stop further action on the part of the new National Assembly, and agreed that it must be ignored. Sixteen hours were sufficient for the preparations, and the Crown demanded forty-eight; besides, contended Bailly, a message ought to have been sent the night before in time for him to

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 178 seq.

give the deputies due notice and consult on what course to pursue.

At nine o'clock, the usual hour of opening the morning sitting, Bailly and the secretaries reached the hall. The sentinels denied them entrance, but M. de Vassau, the officer on duty, for whom Bailly sent, treated them courteously, took them into the hall where the workmen were at work and had already removed the benches, allowed them to take what papers they wanted, and then asked them to retire. This Bailly did, but not until, as President of the National Assembly, he had drawn up a short *procès-verbal* or minute, protesting indignantly at the outrage done to the representatives of the nation. Then with the secretaries he joined his excited colleagues in the Avenue de Paris. "The opinion was general," says Malouet, "that the king, the court, the prelates and the nobles wished to destroy the States General and to set up despotism by means of armed force."¹ All, therefore, were of one mind; the Assembly must hold its sitting, but where? "Let us go to Marly and hold our *Séance* at the doors of the castle," cried one; others suggested the Place d'Armes, the great open space before the Château at Versailles, "there we shall hold our *Champ de mai*"; and, finally, the Doctor Guillotin, a Paris deputy, proposed the *Salle du Jeu de Paume*.

¹ Malouet, P. V. de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 322.

This was a large hall close by the Rue de Vieux Versailles used for playing tennis. Galleries ran round three sides, and the roof was painted blue and decorated with *fleurs-de-lys*, for royalty played there, but it had no furniture. The proprietor gladly welcomed the deputies, and did what he could to supply their wants ; five or six benches, a table, a door laid on two barrels for a desk, were all that were got together except an arm-chair offered to Bailly, but which he refused to use while the Assembly stood.

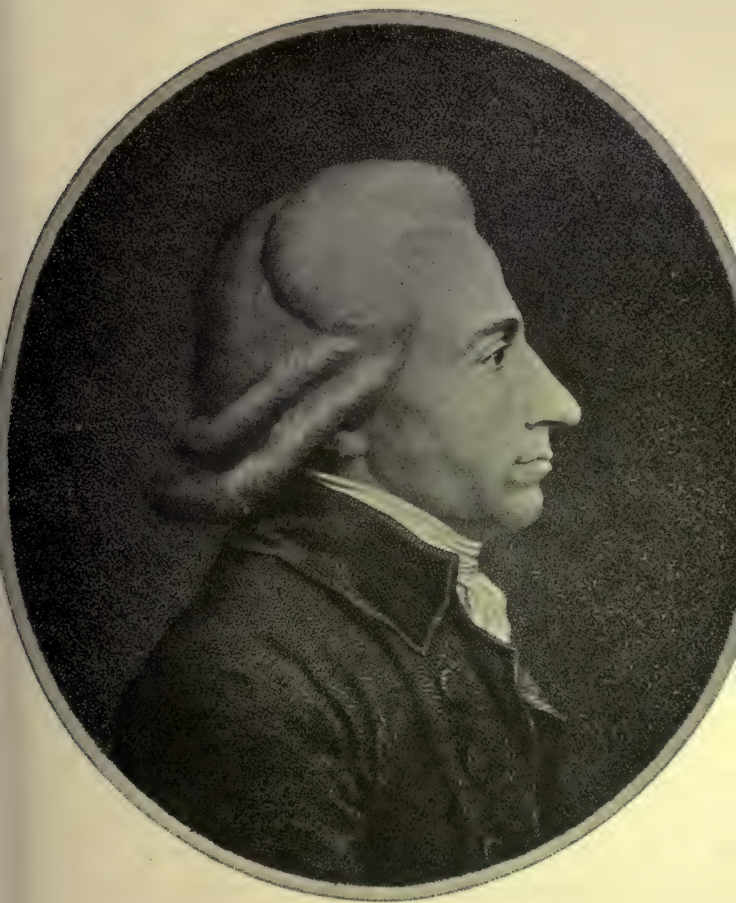
By half-past ten the deputies had assembled ; the galleries were filled with spectators, and an eager crowd blocked the main street from which the hall opened. More significant than the sympathy of the citizens of Versailles was that of the *Gardes de la Prévôte de l'Hôtel du Roi*, troops told off at the beginning of May to keep guard at the Salle des Menus-Plaisirs, and who now offered to continue their services at the Salle du Jeu de Paume. The offer was accepted, and the men were already at their post when their major appeared and ordered them to retire, but the guards stoutly refused, saying they were under the orders of the President of the National Assembly, and would incur any danger rather than desert their post.

In such circumstances, surrounded by the people, guarded by royal troops, the sitting of June 20th

began. Bailly read the order he had received from the Grand Master of Ceremonies, and the *procès-verbal* he had himself drawn up in the Salle des États, after which it was moved and unanimously resolved that the deputies having been called together to frame a Constitution, to restore public order, and to maintain the true principles of the monarchy, no power could hinder their deliberations. They therefore bound themselves by solemn oath not to separate until these things were done, decreed that in whatever place they met, *there* was the National Assembly, and ratified their oath by their signatures. In a voice so loud and clear that his words were heard by the people listening in the street, Bailly, standing on the improvised table, repeated the oath, the deputies cried, "We swear it," and the crowd shouted "*Vive le roi!*"—they had not yet learned to say "*Vive la nation!*"

That same evening the Council met again at Marly. Although the majority of the clergy had resolved to join the Third Estate, although that Estate had held its sitting and taken weighty decisions despite the orders of the king, the ministers still hoped that the *Séance royale* might check, if not annul, its doings.

The discussion was long and hot. Necker tried to persuade the king not to annul the decree by which the Third Estate had constituted itself a



L'ABBÉ SIÉYÈS.

From a drawing by Guérin engraved by Fiesinger.



National Assembly. Barentin wished Louis to pronounce it illegal and unconstitutional. "Why," he urged, "so much consideration for the Third Estate? . . . His Majesty forbade it to meet until after the *Séance royale*; it has disobeyed, and when I left Versailles was holding its sitting in a *jeu de paume*."¹ Nothing was decided, when about ten o'clock a message from the queen called the king away. When he returned it was too late to vote; the Council therefore was adjourned until next day at Versailles, and the *Séance* postponed until the 23rd of June.

The delay was unfortunate, for next day the king's brothers took part in the Council, and men said the queen's message was a ruse to secure the triumph of the court party, for on one point only—the question of deliberating and voting in common—and that with strict limitations, did Necker secure his own way.

But the court had to contend with a stronger will than that of Necker, and when on the 23rd Louis went to the Salle des États-Généraux with all the pomp and circumstance of regal power, annulled the decree of the 17th, condemned that of the 20th, announced *his intentions* towards the people, and ordered the deputies meantime to separate at once and repair on the morrow to their own

¹ Barentin, *Mémoire autographe*, p. 180 *seq.*

Chambers, the majority of the clergy, a few nobles and the Third Estate sat still. Workmen came and forthwith began to remove the hangings and seats occupied by the court, but the deputies sat on in gloomy silence, deep disappointment on every face. They had listened to an exposition, not to a speech addressed to a free assembly.

"The king," wrote Lally-Tollendal, a steady Royalist, "made concessions, but he embodied them in an Act called a declaration of the *Intentions* of the king, and with the word *intentions* we heard also for the first time in the free States-General of *orders* and *prohibitions*."¹ The manner of concession did not please the Third Estate, and still less the concluding words of the king's address. "If by a fatality which I hardly conceive possible, you desert me in my endeavours for reform, I shall myself carry out what is needed for the good of my people. I shall consider myself their sole true representative, and knowing your *cahiers* and the perfect unison between my intentions and the wishes of the people, shall do so with the confidence such harmony can inspire."²

At length, after a silence that seemed to have lasted an hour, the Grand Master of Ceremonies returned to the hall. He went up to Bailly and

¹ Lally-Tollendal, *Mémoires*, p. 44.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 145.

asked him if he had not heard the king's command. "Sir," replied the President, "the Assembly was adjourned until after the *Séance royale*. I cannot separate it without its own consent." "Is this your answer, and am I to give this answer to the king?" "Yes," replied the President, somewhat sadly, and, turning to his colleagues, added: "I believe that the Assembly of the nation cannot receive orders." "We are assembled here," added Mirabeau, "by the will of the nation, and nothing but force will expel us." So the Grand Master retired and the Assembly remained.

Yet it was in uncertain mood and did not know what to do. "Gentlemen," said the Abbé Sieyès, "you are to-day exactly what you were yesterday," whereupon the National Assembly voted decrees persisting in those of the 17th and 20th June, and declared the persons of its deputies inviolable.¹

Meantime the Grand Master followed the king and gave him Bailly's reply. Louis received it in silence, walking restlessly up and down his room; then, seeing an order was expected, issued this: "Ah, well, if they do not wish to leave their hall, let them stay."²

A little later in the day the poor, irresolute king

¹ Bailly, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 214. See also Brette, A., *Séance royale du 23 juin*, who denies that Mirabeau used the word "bayonets."

² Droz, J., *Histoire du règne de Louis XVI.*, bk. viii. p. 270.

had a fresh decision to make. Necker had not been at the *Séance royale*, and was known to have dissented from the resolutions come to in the Council of the king, and a rumour was afloat that he had resigned. A crowd of over five thousand people was besieging his house in the Rue de la Surintendance, the deputies were praying him to remain, and the people shouting "Vive Necker!" "Down with the aristocrats!" "Long live the Third Estate!" Alarmed at the state of public feeling, the queen went to her husband, and Necker was sent for to the palace. His return was anxiously awaited, and when it was known that the king had requested him to remain, the people, overjoyed, conducted him in triumph to his house, and even proposed going to the king to thank him for "so great a benefit."

For the moment the queen had saved the situation. "Had Necker retired," wrote the Comte de Mercy, "or had he been arrested, as some members of the Royal Family wished, the people would have risen in revolt." But so long as the Orders remained separate the danger was not over. "From the 23rd to the 27th of June," adds the Comte, "we passed through the most critical days I have seen in this country."¹ On June 24th the National

¹ Arneth, G. von, *Correspondance secrète entre le comte de Mercy-Argenteau et l'empereur Joseph II.*, vol. ii. p. 254 seq.

Assembly met as usual, and among the deputies was the majority of the clergy. Next day forty-seven nobles, led by the Duc d'Orléans, made their way to the Salle des États, and the king looked on irresolute. By the 27th the situation proved impossible, and Louis sent as dignified a message as he could, requesting his nobles and the minority of his clergy to join their fellow-deputies—the body of men whose political existence only four days earlier he had refused to acknowledge. It was with great reluctance that the nobles obeyed; indeed, many were led to believe that the union would only be temporary, that troops were advancing which would give the king control of his subjects, and that in fourteen days all would be changed. But it was in no grudging spirit that the Third Estate received the other Orders, or that the people welcomed the concession of the Crown. The crowds that waited to cheer the deputies hurried from the Salle des États to the palace and called for the king, and, remembering that she had upheld Necker, called also for the queen. From the palace they went to the Rue de la Surintendance, where Necker was, and to the Avenue de Paris, where Bailly lived. Versailles, Paris, and all France held rejoicings for three days.

Thus, after a struggle only six weeks long, ended the first conflict between the Assembly of the

nation and the Crown. It removed legislation from the Councils of the king to those of the Assembly of the representatives of the people, and it destroyed that ancient bulwark of the old regime, the three separate Orders of the realm. On the 27th of June the States-General became really the National Assembly of France. That evening, as the sitting was about to close, the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, who had been President of the clergy, assumed it his right to adjourn the Assembly. Bailly, who from Dean of the Third Estate had become President of the National Assembly, stepped forward. "Monseigneur," he said, "you are not President; it is for me to adjourn the Assembly."¹ With these words the States-General passed into history.

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 252.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING AND THE CAPITAL.



PERHAPS the fatal disability of Louis to adopt any far-reaching policy was never more disastrous than in the days which followed the union of the Orders—a union finally effected by his own deed and occasioning an outburst of

loyalty which showed how ready the deputies still were to respond to any advance the king might make.

Had Louis been capable of following up his advantage, and of making himself one with the Assembly he had helped to render National, the events of July might not have occurred. As it was, he allowed himself to be governed by the extreme Royalists, and consented to measures which made

his distrust of the Assembly all too manifest, and only resulted in further loss both of prestige and of prerogative to the Crown.

As so often happens, the party which had lost in the contest was stronger after its defeat than before. The National Assembly, having attained its end, ceased to be strenuous. It also ceased to be unanimous in its opinions. The very union of the Three Orders introduced disunion into the National Assembly, for the bond between the Crown and the majority of the nobles was not broken, and their union with the Third Estate was regarded as a mere expedient to serve until the plans of the Royalists could be carried out. That party had but one object in view; to minimise the influence of the Assembly, and to defend the Crown from popular control.

Unfortunately the ministry acted as an incentive to, rather than a drag on, the Royalists. "Necker," wrote Mercy in May 1789, "alone of all the ministers makes headway against the storm";¹ but Necker, by his insistence at the Councils at Marly and his absence from the *Séance royale*, had further estranged himself from the king, while his consent on June 23rd to remain in office, without making conditions which would secure his

¹ Arneth, *Correspondance secrète du comte de Mercy-Argenteau et l'empereur Joseph II.*, vol. ii. p. 239.

advice having proper weight, injured him in the eyes of his colleagues. He himself was absorbed in finance, and showed an unstatesmanlike disregard of the necessity of fostering relations between the Crown and the Assembly. He had had an opportunity of allying himself with Mirabeau, who was fast becoming the most influential, as he was the ablest, amongst the deputies, and he had abused it. "Your Necker," cried that statesman, "is a fool."¹ On the other hand Barentin was definite in his policy, had influence with the king, and was supported by the Minister of War—a fact which, at this juncture, was important, for orders were issued from the War Office concentrating round Paris and Versailles some 50,000 additional troops, many of them foreign regiments serving under the French flag. What these troops were intended to do is not quite clear, but that the supporters of the old regime wished them to be used against the Assembly seems evident. There were schemes of transferring the Assembly to Metz or Compiègne and of arresting its principal deputies; there was talk of dissolving it, and for either of these force would be necessary. The king was told that in the present excited state of public feeling troops were essential for the safety of the capital.

At this early stage in the history of the National

¹ Malouet, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 276 *seq.* 1st ed.

Assembly the heart of Paris was at one with the Third Estate, and the agitations at Versailles were reflected in large at Paris. But one can hardly understand the significance of the Paris agitations without dwelling for a moment on two great political centres of the capital—the Assembly of Electors and the Palais-Royal.

When the Assembly of Electors agreed to remain a corporate body, pledged to watch over the doings of the Paris deputies in the States-General, Paris found herself for the first time since medieval days in possession of a freely-elected representative body. And when on the 28th of June this body was granted permission to occupy the Grande Salle of the Hôtel de Ville,¹ it became identified in the eyes of the citizens with civic life at the expense of the old, almost effete, *bureau de la ville*, which occupied the Salle des Gouverneurs in the same building.

The Assembly of Electors was a legally-constituted centre in so far as it had been called into being by the king himself. In the privileged precincts of the Palais-Royal, exempt from the surveillance of the police, was a centre of another kind. The gardens of the Palais-Royal had long been a place of public resort, but in 1782 the Duc

¹ Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des séances des Électeurs de Paris*, vol. i. p. 88 seq.

d'Orléans had built arcades round the gardens, and had let the buildings as shops. In these arcades were many clubs and cafés, and here revolutionary Paris congregated. "In the gardens of the Palais-Royal," says M. Robinet, "there met a vast popular Assembly, a kind of forum in which political Paris daily held her assizes. It had its centre of direction—its bureau—in the café de Foy. . . . It was there that the patriots judged men and events, there that they passed resolutions, arranged demonstrations; . . . it was from the Palais-Royal that those sudden, terrible movements arose, which more than once made the throne tremble, and which once and again checked the plots of the counter-revolution."¹ The Palais-Royal had its own journal,² sarcastic and scurrilous; it issued its orders by placards on its walls; it acted as judge, jury and executioner on offenders against its idols; and yet, with all its extravagances, it was not without a certain respect for order.

While the Hôtel de Ville was the resort of the graver citizens and the Palais-Royal of the more revolutionary, the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, lying between the Hôtel de Ville and the old fortress of the Bastille, furnished a population which was always ready to form or swell a mob.

¹ Robinet, J. F. E., *Danton, homme d'État*, p. 42.

² *Petit Journal du Palais-Royal*. See also B. M. P., *Palais-Royal* R. 231, etc.

Near this quarter lay the Halles, whose stall-keepers had always assumed and possessed a certain position in Paris. They were recognised in State ceremonies, they sent deputations to present poems—*bouquets* they were called—to the king and queen on their fête-days, and they took it on themselves to show their approval or disapproval of ministers. Of all the self-constituted centres in Paris the Halles alone had traditional standing.

The lower classes, however, were not interested in the political movements of the day, except in so far as they saw in them hope of relief from the burdens they had to bear. In 1789 these burdens were even heavier than usual. In July 1788 a terrible hail-storm had beaten down the standing crops for miles round Paris, and had raised the price of bread, and the winter had been excessive in its cold. The Seine was frozen from Paris to Hâvre, and though many of the richer Parisians heated their entrance halls, and turned them into public shelters, the distress was very great. The suffering increased the discontent which was latent not only in Paris, but throughout France, and made the poor an easy prey to agitators.

At the same time the uncertainty as to who were agitators weakened the hand of the law: the Comte d'Artois and the Duc d'Orléans themselves were more than once suspected, and to take vigorous

action against princes of the blood might prove awkward.

There is still another point. In thinking of the miserable population and of the crimes they committed, one must not forget the education in cruelty furnished by the old regime. "The number and nature of offences, the sentences pronounced, the publicity of the pillory, of the whip, of the brand, of executions, are so many indispensable elements to the understanding of the moral and social condition of Paris at the end of the eighteenth century. The brilliant literature of the *philosophes* and the poets, the refinement of the arts, the splendour of the high life dazzle us, and by a natural contrast the lower classes terrify us when they burst suddenly on a scene so brilliant," writes Monin. "Human shame, suffering and death," he adds, "formed the ordinary spectacle of the Parisians. What wonder if such an education rendered the mob who witnessed it cruel."¹

The first outbreak of the mob occurred on the 28th of April 1789. It was directed against one of the Paris electors, M. Réveillon, who had introduced patterned wall-papers into France, and owned a paper-mill in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. He was a good master, but rumour reported him to have said that fifteen sous a day was pay sufficient for any man. It seems probable that the riot was

¹ Monin, H., *État de Paris en 1789*, p. 86.

due to agitation paid for by the court party, in the hope that a rising of the people might prejudice the king against reform in which popular representation had a part, and even induce him to delay the opening of the States-General. It is at least certain that men feared this result, for a letter exists in the National Archives of Paris praying Louis not to be turned aside from the States-General by the action of mobs.¹

But what was most significant in this riot was the attitude of the troops called out to quell it. These were the Gardes Françaises, a picked regiment of three thousand six hundred men, whose principal duty was the guardianship of the capital. They had their barracks in Paris, had married Parisians and were mostly Parisians by birth. They mingled with the people, attended at the theatres to keep order there, and were in every respect closely allied to the capital. Their commanding officers left all detail to the sergeants, men recruited from the ranks. Such was the regiment called out to quell disturbances; a superb instrument if well in hand, for "to have the Gardes Françaises on one's side was to be master of Paris, herself mistress of France, but not to have ———"² a question which Besenval, at this time their colonel, leaves unanswered. Unfortunately they were not then well in hand. They had just

¹ Archives nat., Paris, B. iii. ² Besenval, de, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. 358.

lost the Duc de Biron as their commander, a severe but steady ruler, and had in his place the Duc de Châtelet, a fussy officer whom the men disliked, and who was unable to repress the revolutionary spirit which presently took possession of the regiment.

The first symptom of insubordination was manifested at the Réveillon riot. Called out to quell the mob, the regiment responded slowly to orders, showing great disinclination to fire on the people, and left the real work of restoring order to the Suisses, to whose aid the authorities were obliged to have recourse.

Two months later the attitude assumed by the Gardes Françaises was clearly expressed in a resolution drawn up on the 24th of June by its first company. "We, the undersigned," runs the document, "desirous once for all of giving the king and our fellow-citizens a clear statement of our views, promise and swear on our honour and our flag to defend our good king against all his enemies, and to shed for him our last drop of blood, according to our engagement on entering his service, and according to the dictates of our heart. But at the same time we promise and we swear before the country to disobey any order, come from whom it may, that would deprive our good king of a single subject ; should we be required to fire upon the people, *nom du diable*, we

shall lay down our arms, and trust for protection to M. Necker, who will not suffer brave soldiers to fight against their fathers, brothers or friends.”¹

Next day two companies left their barracks without leave, afraid, it was said, of being called to serve against Paris, then excited by the struggle between the Orders at Versailles. On the 30th of June eleven of their number were seized and sent to the prison of the Abbaye, close by the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. That same evening a letter was brought to the café de Foy, declaring that the soldiers were prisoners because they would not fire upon the people. Immediately a patriot left the café, mounted a chair in the garden of the Palais-Royal, and read the letter aloud. Then arose the cry “To the Abbaye!”—a cry which three years later, was of such dread import. A band of three or four hundred issued from the garden, and by the time this band had crossed the Seine and made its way up the narrow streets of the *rive gauche* it was some thousands strong. Hammers, hatchets, anything the mob could find were seized, and by eight o’clock in the summer evening the door of the prison was broken down and the prisoners were free.²

¹ B. M. P., *Gardes Françaises*, R. 265.

² B. M. P., *Gardes Françaises*, R. 265. *Relation de ce qui s’est passé à l’Abbaye Saint-Germain le 30 juin au soir.*

Meantime the dragoons and hussars, summoned to put down the mob, rode up with sheathed swords, accepting wine offered them by the people, drank to the king and the nation, and allowed the eleven prisoners to be carried to the Palais-Royal, where they were fêted and sheltered ; it was not the Gardes Françaises alone who were disaffected.

And yet the Crown hastened the concentration of the troops on Paris and Versailles, and thus proclaimed to all France, and especially to a jealous metropolis, its distrust of the Assembly of the people. For three days and three nights soldiers silently entered Versailles and took up their posts without the sound of a drum or a word of command from their officers, and the deputies in the exaggerated oratory of the time compared themselves to Roman Senators awaiting the invasion of the Gauls. On the 8th of July Mirabeau spoke. "Thirty-five thousand men are already posted at Paris and Versailles, and twenty thousand more are expected, artillery follow them . . . our roads, our bridges, our promenades are turned into military posts. Secret orders, hurried counter-orders, in a word, preparations for war meet all eyes, and fill all hearts with indignation. . . . What are they here for? If to quell disturbance they are useless ; one word from the king has done more than cannon

or swords could do¹—besides, the people are quiet and hopeful, relying on us. Our presence is the pledge of public order.”²

Next day an address was sent to the king praying him to withdraw the troops and to sanction, were it necessary, a citizen guard for Paris and Versailles. The answer, received on the same evening and read to the deputies on the 11th of July, only gave colour to the suspicions entertained by the Assembly regarding the intentions of many of the king's councillors. Louis refused withdrawal, and proposed instead to remove the States-General—he had not yet adopted the term “National Assembly”—to Noyon or Soissons, and to go himself to Compiègne, so as to be near the deputies. “To do this,” said Mirabeau, “would be to place ourselves between the troops at Versailles and others which might at any moment march on us from Flanders. Nor have we asked to be removed from the troops; we have only asked that the troops be withdrawn from the capital, and on this we insist.”³

The citizens of Paris were as keenly alive to the danger created by the presence of the troops, and to the effects of the rumours concerning them, as was the Assembly. Even the “ladies of Paris” took

¹ On July 4 the king had pardoned the offending Gardes Françaises and as usual a loyal outburst had succeeded.

² *Courrier de Provence, Dix-huitième lettre.*

³ *Courrier de Provence, Dix-neuvième lettre.*

upon themselves to protest. They wrote to the officers of the new-made camp on the Champ de Mars, and prayed them to ask leave to return to their quarters. "If you have been given bullets for the purpose of restoring order, well and good. But we have strong arms enough in this great city wherewith to restrain evil-doers. . . . The people, if once roused, know no bounds ; your presence excites instead of calming them ; the French must be led, not threatened."¹ "To menace with bayonets and cannon a people wanting work and food, is not this to pour boiling water on wounds?" asked Bancal d'Issart on the 10th of July at the Assembly of Electors.²

Meantime, notwithstanding strict orders to the contrary, the troops themselves were fraternising with the citizens. "On Friday, July 10th," writes a contemporary pamphlet, "several of the royal artillery escaped from the Hôtel des Invalides, and appeared at the Palais-Royal." They were received with open arms. One of their number begged a moment's silence. "Gentlemen," he said, "in the name of the corps, I declare to you that from colonel to recruits we look upon ourselves as soldiers by profession and citizens by duty. If, therefore, the ministers are so ill-advised as to order us to fire

¹ *Lettre des dames de Paris à MM. les officiers du camp*, Bib. nat.

² Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des Électeurs*, vol. i. p. 136.

on you, we will load with the bullet before the powder." ¹

Such was the state of affairs at Paris and Versailles when on the afternoon of Sunday the 12th of July it became publicly known that Necker was on his way to Basle, a disgraced minister, that Montmorin, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Necker's steady supporter, Puységur, Luzerne and Villedeuil, Ministers of War, the Marine, and the King's Household respectively, were also dismissed.

This was bad enough, but, by and by, it leaked out that de Broglie,² already unpopular as general of the troops round Paris, was to become Minister of War; that Breteuil, known as an ally of Marie-Antoinette, and thus popularly identified with the extreme party, was to be the king's chief adviser. It was even rumoured that Foulon, once an Intendant, who had said that if the people were hungry they might eat grass, was to replace Necker, the people's idol. No more foolish ministry could have been proposed, and its nomination goes far to prove that the extreme party believed that their hour of triumph was come, and that, with the help of the troops, they could dominate the Assembly, keep Paris in subjection, and reinstate the old regime.

And certainly there was danger of this. Time

¹ *L'armée citoyenne*, pamphlet in Bib. nat., Paris.

² Broglie was called the *Général Imbroglia* in the pamphlets of the day.

after time the parlements had been dispersed by royal command enforced by royal troops, and had not the king fifty-five thousand troops at hand? "If," as M. Aulard says, "nothing but a miracle could save the Assembly," it is certainly true that Paris wrought the miracle.¹

¹ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique de la révolution française*, p. 36.

CHAPTER VIII.

REVOLUTION.



CAMILLE DESMOULINS.

ABOUT three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, July 12th, Camille Desmoulins, a young and ardent patriot, excited over the news of Necker's fall, and provoked that Paris took it quietly, hurried to the Palais-Royal, and there found a congenial atmosphere. Six thousand persons, says the rumour of the day, listened as he told them that the nation was insulted, that a massacre such as that of Saint-Bartholomew might follow this very night, and that they must "to arms." "Let us adopt green for our badge," he added; "it is the colour of hope."¹ But the Paris instinct was for procession rather than for arms. Going to the waxworks of

¹ Desmoulins, Camille, *Correspondance*, vol. ii. p. 91.

Curtius,¹ in the Boulevard du Temple, they obtained from him a bust of Necker and another of the Duc d'Orléans, and with these draped in crape, they marched through the city insisting that all whom they met should remove their hats.² Towards evening they encountered a detachment of dragoons. A fight followed, which the Royal-Allemand, a German cavalry regiment, drawn up on the Place Louis XV., and commanded by the Prince de Lambesc, tried to stop. The soldiers were patient, but the procession had attracted a disorderly mob, which insulted and even stoned the troops, and their commander ordered them to advance at a trot and disperse the mob. At this a number of the Gardes Françaises prepared to oppose the cavalry, and Lambesc, anxious to avoid a fight, retired, but the busts were broken, several of the crowd hurt, and the mob, believing that the massacre they were told to expect had begun, fled back to the Palais-Royal shouting for arms.

The riotous element was let loose. Up on the heights of Montmartre, where now stands the great church of the Sacré-Cœur, twenty thousand of the unemployed were given work in levelling and making roads, and this was only a part of the dangerous

¹ Curtius was uncle to Madame Tussaud, who, after his death, removed his wax-works to England, and in 1833 established them permanently in London.

² Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 327. For an excellent account of these days see introduction to Flammermont's *Prise de la Bastille*.

population in Paris. These were the men who made "hideous" the night of July 12th.¹ They burst into food shops, into armourers' stores and into taverns, set fire to the *barrières* or city-gates, where toll was levied on goods entering the town, and threatened to set fire to the Hôtel de Ville. "What a night," writes Mercier; "a multitude agitated by fear, uncertainty and indignation; a vague, uneasy murmur, accompanied by purposeless blows on the doors of houses and of shops; the dread, monotonous, continued sound of all the bells in the immense capital; the tocsin in the darkness!"² To such a pass had Louis brought his capital.

In a panic the terrified citizens appealed to the Assembly of Electors. They asked for arms on the ground that the troops were advancing on the Tuileries, and that dangerous individuals who could give no account of themselves were filling every quarter of Paris, and they prayed the Electors to convoke the districts, and with their help organise a *milice bourgeoise* or citizen-guard. The Electors gave what arms there were, some three hundred and fifty muskets belonging to the Hôtel de Ville, and at eleven at night, as soon as they could command quiet to consult together, they sent out orders to the districts; then in little groups of two or four

¹ Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des Électeurs*, vol. i. p. 175.

² Mercier, L. B., *Nouveau tableau de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 61.

they went themselves to the centres of disorder to try and disperse the rioters.¹ Little more could be done that night, but next morning all Paris was at work.

The bells of the churches in which the citizens had met in April to choose their electors now summoned them to protect the city and the deputies who represented it. "The *assemblée générale* was convoked by the sound of the bell," writes the *procès-verbal* of the Parish of Saint-Germain-le-vieil en Cité, "and in a moment three hundred and forty-four of the principal inhabitants had assembled."² They formed themselves into a committee, chose a president, appointed officers to command the four companies which the district undertook to provide, and passed a resolution that every father of a family, proprietor or principal "occupier" in the district should enrol his name and promise either service or funds on pain of being held a traitor to his country.

And what was done in the old parish in the centre of Paris was done throughout the city. The districts had been electrified into life, a new power had arisen in Paris, a power which from this time until the institution of the Republic was to exert an ever-increasing influence in favour of revolu-

¹ Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des Électeurs*, vol. i. p. 97 seq.

² Arch. nat., Paris, C. 134 doss. 6. In this carton (C. 134) are interesting papers, not yet printed, relating to the doings of the districts.

tionary ideas. This was the first practical result of the concentration of the troops and dismissal of the ministers.

Meantime at the Hôtel de Ville important changes were taking place. On July 12th, as we have seen, the citizens had gone to the Assembly of Electors, and without waiting for royal or other authority, had prayed it to convoke the sixty districts and organise a citizen guard there and then. Such was the excitement in the capital that the Electors accepted the responsibility. But when, on the morning of the 13th, the crowd gathered on the Place de Grève before the Hôtel de Ville, and again demanded arms, the Electors replied that they had no authority to administer the affairs of the city. At this the people called for M. de Flesselles, Provost of Merchants and head of the *bureau de la ville*, who, on a formal requisition, came, accompanied by M. de Corny, *procureur du roi*, the four *échevins* or aldermen, and the *greffier* or town clerk. There followed a scene of great significance.

In olden days, before the reign of Intendants, municipal and village affairs had been decided in assemblies of the inhabitants, presided over by a popularly elected syndic. Such *assemblées générales*, though not abolished, had had little power for many a day; this power the action of the king and court was now to revive. For the citizens assembled on

the Place de Grève did not consider themselves the unruly mob historians generally describe them, but an *assemblée générale* endowed with powers to confirm appointments made by the king, and to make others irrespective of any will but their own.

Acting as the old *assemblée générale* acted, the citizens confirmed the *bureau de la ville* in its functions, and then took certain resolutions. They resolved that a *comité permanent*,¹ to be composed of the *bureau de la ville*, of thirteen Electors and one ordinary citizen with power to add to their number be appointed, and that relations between this *comité permanent* and the districts be established; that each district should be asked to provide a contingent of two hundred men for the *milice bourgeoise*, and that all citizens possessed of arms be ordered to carry them to the districts for distribution; finally, that groups of men should be forbidden to hang about in any part whatsoever of the city. The document was signed by the Provost of the Merchants "for and in the name of the Assembly."²

This was the beginning of that Commune of Paris and of that National Guard which were to free the capital from the control of the Crown and enable her to defy the troops on which the party

¹ That is, a committee which should sit night and day while the crisis lasted.

² B. M. P., *Municipalité*, R. 225, *Recueil des arrêtés, délibérations etc.* Cp. also Bailly et Duveyrier, vol. i. p. 185.

of the old regime founded their confidence and their plans. It was the second result of the tactics of the court.

And not only was an armed force created which could at any moment be opposed to the regular troops, but the ranks of the regular troops themselves were perceptibly thinned. There is, perhaps, nothing more striking among all the striking events of July 1789, than the way in which the people of Paris, whether servants of the Crown or ordinary citizens, co-operated in the establishment of a *milice bourgeoise*.

As was to be expected from their conduct during the preceding months, the Gardes Françaises at once offered their services to the city of Paris. They were followed by the Guet and Garde de Paris, by the company of gunners in the Garde de l'Hôtel de Ville, and by the Basoches,¹ of the Palais de Justice and of the Châtelet. The old institutions, one and all, declared for the new regime, and the acquisition of so large a number of fully or partially trained men added immensely to the strength of the citizen guard.

By the afternoon of July 13th the *milice bourgeoise* was roughly organised, commanding and subordinate officers had been chosen provisionally by

¹ Very ancient and half military corporations composed of the law-clerks of these two courts of justice.

the districts, and Paris was prepared to meet the troops should they advance.

The volunteers, except those who were already soldiers, wore no uniform, but were distinguished from their fellow-citizens by a badge. Green, the colour chosen by Camille Desmoulins the day before, was now rejected as being that of the Comte d'Artois, and red and blue, the colours of Paris, were adopted in its stead. No one who did not wear these colours was allowed to carry arms,—partly to prevent unruly brawls, but still more because every musket and sabre was needed for the citizen guard.

For this question of arms was becoming a problem. From district after district requests came to the *comité permanent* for ammunition and for muskets.¹ The Hôtel de Ville had already, on Sunday the 12th, given all it possessed, the Gardes Françaises required their own, and though many of the citizens could make some contribution, this was not nearly enough. The *comité permanent* had spent its morning in drawing up, printing, and distributing regulations for the new *milice*; it spent much of its afternoon in trying to procure arms.

Its task was made more difficult by an unfortunate and mysterious incident.² About one o'clock

¹ Numerous examples of these are found in C. 134, *Arch. nat.*

² Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des Électeurs*, vol. i. 193 seq.

on the afternoon of the 13th M. de Flesselles, who had been chosen head of the *comité permanent*, announced that a consignment of twelve thousand muskets was expected, and that if the citizens returned at five o'clock, these would be distributed among the districts. The citizens were punctual, but not the consignment, and the impatient volunteers were told to come back once more at seven. At six o'clock six great cases marked "artillery" arrived, and the *comité permanent*, greatly relieved, sent for the Gardes Françaises to come and help in conveying the muskets to their respective destinations. But when the cases were opened they were found to contain nothing more useful than old linen. At once the *comité* sent in all haste to the Chartreuse and to the Arsenal, but in vain—the monks had no arms, and those possessed by the Arsenal had been taken to the Bastille two days before. It then issued orders to the armourers to make halberds with all possible speed, and waited anxiously for morning.

The night passed more quietly than the men sitting in the Hôtel de Ville had dared to hope, and with the morning fresh efforts were made to obtain the requisite arms. The *comité* sent one of its members, M. de Corny, to the Governor of the Invalides, the great military hospital founded by Louis XIV., with a request for such muskets as he

had. The Governor, M. de Sombreuil, received him courteously, professed sincere friendliness towards the *comité*, but declared that he could not give up the arms without orders from Versailles, whither on the previous day he had despatched a courier. He asked de Corny to wait.¹

But others as well as the responsible messenger of the Hôtel de Ville had gone to the Invalides. A crowd, gathered mainly from the quarter of Paris where cluster the colleges of the University, accompanied by Gardes Françaises, by young advocates, and by the parishioners of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont—led by their *curé*, surrounded the Invalides, and with noisy demonstration awaited the result of de Corny's mission. By-and-by de Corny, followed by the Governor, came out and urged patience. In this the people seemed about to acquiesce, when someone shouted that patience meant danger. In a moment the building was besieged, the arms seized and the horses of de Corny's carriage, waiting to drive him to the Hôtel de Ville, unharnessed and made to help in dragging out cannon.² Twenty-eight thousand muskets on which the Hôtel de Ville had counted for arming the *milice bourgeoise* were in the hands of an undisciplined mob.

While these things were happening at the south-

¹ Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des Électeurs*, vol. i. 299 seq.

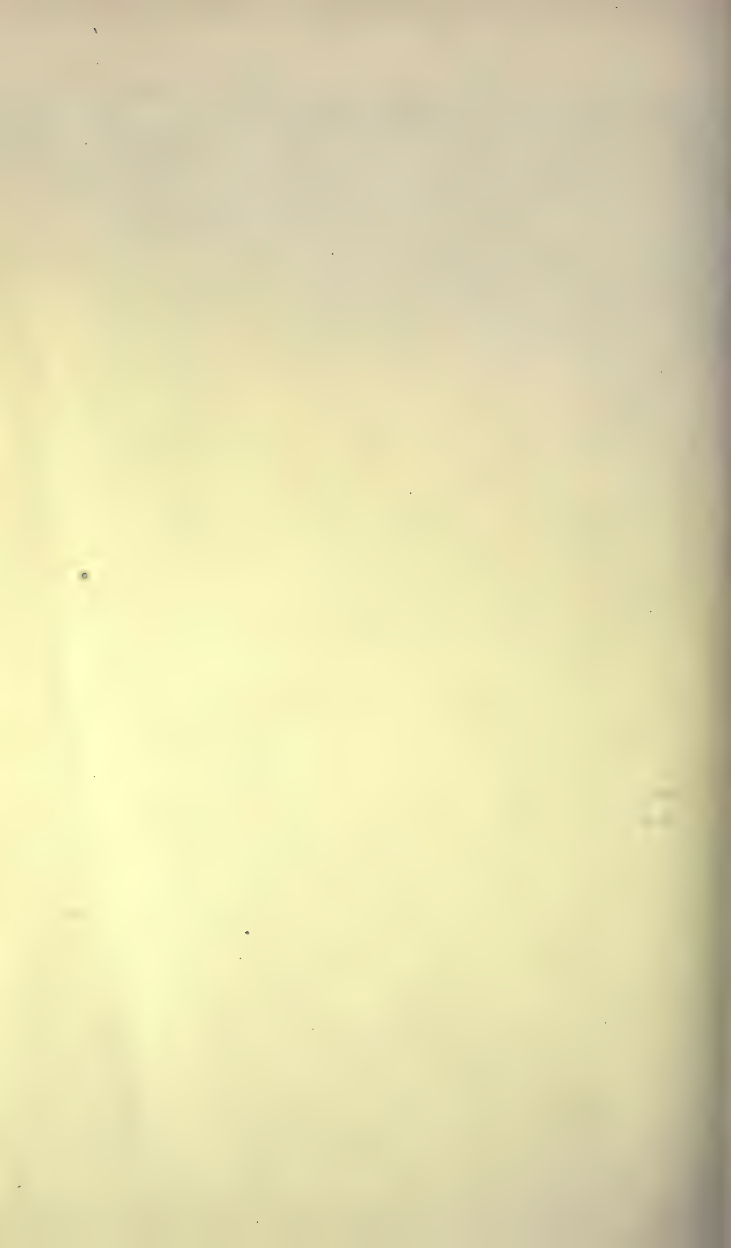
² *Id.*, vol. i. p. 301.

western extremity of the capital, a formidable rising was taking place in the east. Close by the city gate leading from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine stood the old fortress of the Bastille.¹ In it prisoners arrested by *lettres de cachet* were confined, and it was hated as a symbol of despotism; in it also arms and ammunition were known to be stored.

On the morning of Tuesday the 14th the working people who inhabited the Faubourg Saint-Antoine found the guns of the Bastille mounted and trained on their dwellings. To the west of the Champs-Élysées and on the Champ de Mars lay the dreaded foreign regiments; from the north came tidings of other troops. The people as usual hurried to the Hôtel de Ville, where sat the Electors and the *comité permanent*. At once the Electors sent a deputation to de Launay, Governor of the Bastille. He received the delegates graciously, treated them to refreshments, but did not dismount the guns. Meantime the people, growing excited, threatened to attack the fortress. The committee of the district met hurriedly in the church of Saint-Louis de

¹ For the siege of the Bastille see Flammermont, *La journée du 14 juillet, 1789*, who bases his account on the four most reliable contemporary accounts—(a) *Procès-verbaux des séances de l'Assemblée des Électeurs de Paris en 1789*, Bailly et Duveyrier; (b) Dusaulx, *De l'insurrection parisienne*; (c) *Précis exact de la prise de la Bastille*, account given by besieged; (d) *Lettres de M. de Flue*, a lieutenant of the Swiss guard in the Bastille.





Culture, dissuaded them from the attempt and induced them to depute M. Thuriot, an Elector from their own district, to go to the Governor and pray him to dismount the guns. As he entered, the deputation from the Hôtel de Ville left. Thuriot was not more successful than they, but obtained a promise from the Governor not to fire unless attacked. With this promise he went to the Hôtel de Ville, where he arrived before the deputation of the Electors. The *comité permanent* at once drew up a proclamation announcing de Launay's promise. The town crier with his trumpet, ready to call public attention, Thuriot, de Corny and another Elector, ready to make the proclamation, stood on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, when a cannon shot was heard in the direction of the Bastille.

The people of Saint-Antoine, dissatisfied with the answer Thuriot brought, angry and impatient, had entered the Governor's court and demanded arms in no gentle terms. For answer de Launay opened fire. Thus began the siege of the Bastille, at first a blind, confused attack, but presently more regular and military in its character.

Among the crowd standing on the Place de Grève when the cannon shot was heard, was an infantry officer named Hulin. He called to those near him to save their fellow-citizens from murder, and the cry was at once responded to. A group of Gardes

Françaises organised a little company of forty gunners and thirty fusiliers, and with these, some cannon and a volunteer band of *bourgeois*, Hulin hurried to the Bastille.¹ Others had hurried also. The clerks of the Basoche were there, with the Gardes Françaises and the mob that had seized the arms at the Invalides.

It was between two and three in the afternoon when the regular attack began. It was led by Hulin and Jacob-Job Élie, a flag-bearer of an infantry regiment, who happened to be among the crowd. By five o'clock the besiegers had cleared the Governor's court, were pouring fire on the fortress from the roof of the Bastille barracks and had drawn up their cannon in the passage leading to the inner drawbridge and great door which gave entrance to the fortress proper. If they could force these the Bastille was taken. Suddenly, just as the besiegers were about to make a desperate attack, the firing from the fortress ceased, a white flag was seen on one of the towers of the Bastille, and a drummer beat a call to truce. De Launay wished to come to terms. His garrison consisted of eighty-two Invalides, two gunners and thirty-two Swiss; the men had scarcely eaten all day, there was only a little pastry oven with which to bake more bread, and alone of men or officers the Governor was

¹ See Lacroix, S., *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. i. p. 144.

whole-hearted in the fight. But the people would not listen to terms, and de Launay, hearing the shout "Down with the Bastille!" "No capitulation!" seized a piece of paper on which he wrote that there were twenty million pounds of powder in the Bastille, and that if the people would not accept surrender he would set fire to this, and blow up fortress, garrison and neighbourhood. He gave the paper to de Flue, an officer of the Swiss, who after remonstrance, and with great reluctance dropped it from the fortress. As he did so, he heard again the cries of "Down with the bridge!" "No surrender!" for the people were maddened by the loss of nearly one hundred of their number. Returning to de Launay, de Flue reported that he had obeyed, then drew up his men in the great inner court and waited for death;¹ de Launay went to the powder magazine to carry out his threat. But the deed was too terrible. His officers held his hand, and Hulin promised to accept surrender; de Launay's own men lowered the bridge. Thus fell the Bastille before the greater part of Paris knew that it was attacked.

With its fall the sad list of Paris murders began. All day an excited, unmanageable crowd had surged in the Place de Grève. While the *comité permanent* in the Hôtel de Ville issued orders

¹ *Précis exact* and *Lettres de de Flue*.

tending to preserve the peace of the city, forbade the theatres to open, put itself in direct communication with the districts, sent detachments of the *milice bourgeoise* to the barriers to see that neither food nor ammunition left Paris, and opened fresh works for the unemployed, the mob outside the Hôtel de Ville were threatening the lives of the men who were doing their best for the citizens.

Naturally enough, many among the unruly throng drifted off to see the fighting at the Bastille—four hundred had followed Hulin and his band—and these added to the disorderly element already gathered there. On the surrender of the fortress the mob rushed in after the assailants, and before Hulin and his comrades could interfere, had killed three officers and four soldiers of the garrison. To save, if possible, the lives of the others, Elie carried them off as prisoners to the Hôtel de Ville. But before the triumphant procession of “the conquerors of the Bastille,” with the prisoners in their midst, reached the Place de Grève, a fourth officer, Major de Losme, was killed, while on the very steps of the Hôtel de Ville, de Launay was snatched from his protectors and murdered. Another murder followed. The disappointment of the previous day regarding the arms promised by de Flesselles had cast suspicion on his loyalty to the people’s cause, and now the people accused him of further treachery. They had

seized a courier who carried instructions from de Flesselles to the Governor of the Bastille, and, opening his despatches, had found a post-script telling de Launay to hold out, as reinforcements were on their way. The murmurs on the Place de Grève grew louder and louder. The mob declared that the *comité permanent* worked in secret and would not face the citizens. M. de Flesselles, with the members of the *comité*, came out from their inner bureau to the front of the Hôtel de Ville. "If I am suspected by my fellow-citizens," said de Flesselles, "I must resign my office."

The answer was a confused clamour of proposals, but that of taking the offender to the Palais-Royal,¹ there to be tried, met with most general approval. "Very well, gentlemen," said the *Prévot des marchands*, proud noble as he was; "to the Palais-Royal let us go"; and, accompanied by the mob, which pressed closely on him but offered no violence, de Flesselles crossed the square. At the corner of the Quai Pelletier an unknown person shot him down; his head was placed upon a pike and carried in triumph with those of de Losme and de Launay by that part of the population of the great city which its respectable citizens repudiated and called the *bas peuple*.

¹The Palais-Royal had created itself a Tribunal of Justice. See B. M. P., Palais-Royal, R. 231, *Réclamations du Palais-Royal*.

Wild joy followed the capture of the Bastille. The people leapt and shouted, laughed and shed tears. But with night came reaction. The deeds Paris had committed would, it was feared, bring retribution ; the troops would surely come now. So the city sat up waiting. The tocsin sounded, streets were barricaded, courts unpaved ; old men, women, even children, collected piles of stones and stood ready to hurl them if the troops appeared. But no troops came. Paris had done her work.¹

¹ Flammermont, J., *La prise de la Bastille*, ccliv. seq.

CHAPTER IX.

LOUIS, FATHER OF THE COUNTRY.



MEDAL STRUCK FOR THE
COMMUNE OF PARIS.

WHILE these things were happening in the capital, while Paris was providing herself with a new administration and a citizen-guard, and storming the Bastille, the National Assembly at Versailles was debating what steps to take,

listening to accounts brought in of riot, and sending deputations to the king.

Startled by the news of the dismissal of the ministers, the Assembly had spent the morning of Monday, July 13th, in debating the terms of an address to the king. Was Louis to have uncontrolled power to appoint and dismiss ministers, or was the National Assembly to have a voice in the matter? The point was not decided when about two o'clock news reached the Salle des États of

the tumult occasioned in the capital by the dismissal of Necker. The deputies, distressed and indignant, sent an urgent petition to the king, praying him to remove the troops, and to sanction a citizen-guard in Paris ; and at the same time it proposed to send deputies to the capital to reassure the citizens.

There is something pathetic in the king's reply. Ignorant that the control of Paris had already passed from him, he answered that it was for him alone to decide what measures should be taken, and, blind to the power of the deputies over the people, he added ; "I do not doubt the purity of your motives and your desire to aid me, but your presence at Paris would do no good."¹

The Assembly did not take long to decide on its next step. It passed an *arrêt* expressing its regret at the dismissal of the ministers, and announcing its resolve to persist in demanding the withdrawal of the troops and the establishment of a citizen-guard. It declared ministers and also all civil and military officers responsible for any act contrary to the decrees of the Assembly, and solemnly asserted that the actual ministers and Councils of the king were to blame for the present troubles ; it bound itself once again to honour the National Debt, and finally it repeated its determination to have no

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 229. See also on doings of Assembly, *Point du Jour*, No. 23 *seq.*, and *Courrier de Provence*, *Dix-septième lettre*, & *seq.*

intermediary between itself and the king, and it reiterated its decrees of the 17th, 20th and 23rd June.¹

This done, the deputies decided to remain in the Salle des États all night. No business was transacted, but the deputies sat on. "We expected death," said Larevellière-Lépaux, and here and there among them sat their wives, too anxious to leave the hall.² Rumours were afloat that orders had been given to the troops to fire upon the Assembly, and that the troops had refused; but no one knew what to expect or what to fear. The Archbishop of Vienne, President for the fortnight, who was an old man, went home, and Lafayette, who had made himself famous in the American War of Independence, presided in his stead. But nothing happened, and in the morning ordinary business was resumed. A committee of finance was appointed, and a discussion raised on the rights of man; indeed, the morning sitting passed without any reference to current events, except an assurance by one deputy that at ten o'clock on this 14th of July Paris was quiet,³ and an announcement by the President that the king had received the *arrêt* of the previous evening and would consider it.

At five o'clock the evening sitting began. The Abbé Grégoire, one of the first among the clergy

¹ Baudouin, *Coll. des Décrets*, vol. i. p. 28.

² Larevellière-Lépaux, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 78.

³ Arch. nat., Paris, K.K. 647, *Correspondance de M. de Sillery*.

to join the Third Estate, launched a fierce invective against the crimes of the ministers; Mirabeau dwelt on the necessity of dismissing the troops, and a debate had begun, when about six o'clock the Vicomte de Noailles, come straight from Paris, entered the hall and reported the seizure of muskets at the Invalides, and a siege going on at the Bastille. A deputation, headed by the President, and accompanied by de Noailles, was at once sent to the king, while Lafayette, as Vice-President, continued the business of the Assembly, this being considered the only dignified and dutiful course to pursue. Presently a deputation from the Hôtel de Ville was announced; instantly all deliberations ceased, and a dread silence fell upon the hall. The delegates had left the *comité permanent* just at the moment that that body heard the all but incredible news of the surrender of the Bastille, and they brought a message signed by the unfortunate de Flesselles describing the state of things in Paris and praying for help and counsel.

The Assembly, greatly moved, sent a second deputation to the king, but just as it was leaving the hall, the first returned.

All waited to hear the reply. The king was willing to recognise the *milice bourgeoise* and to appoint a general officer at its head, and would withdraw the troops from the Champ de Mars. Notwith-

standing these concessions, the Assembly insisted that the second deputation should see the king. It was led by the aged Archbishop of Paris, no friend to the new regime, he who had prayed the king on his knees to prevent the union of the Orders, but who loved the city of which he had the spiritual care. "You break my heart," said the king, "with the news you bring me from Paris; it is simply incredible that the orders I have issued to the troops can have caused these misfortunes; you know what I have already replied this evening, and I have nothing to add."¹

There was no change in the orders to the troops at Versailles. The town was full of soldiers; there were troops in the Orangerie, troops in the Riding Schools, in the courts of the Écuries, and on the great Place d'Armes, and until they were removed the Assembly intended to sit night and day in the Salle des États. That evening it resolved to petition the king again early next morning, and it drew up a message for the Paris delegates, pledging itself not to relax its efforts until it had obtained from the king the entire withdrawal of the extra troops.² At two in the morning it ceased deliberating, and entered on its vigil.

On the morning of the fifteenth there was a

¹ Hézecques, d', *Souvenirs d'un page de Louis XVI.*, p. 298.

² *Coll. des décrets*, vol. i. p. 30.

change. During the night the Maréchal de Broglie, commander-in-chief of the troops concentrated on the capital, hurried to Versailles, and confirmed all Louis had been told, while at the king's *lever* the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Grand Master of the Wardrobe, told Louis plainly that the rising in Paris meant revolution, not revolt.¹ This time the king was roused, all the troops were withdrawn, and he himself was on his way to the Salle des États by half-past ten in the morning.

The Assembly had begun business an hour earlier than usual, and a deputation was just leaving the hall with the petition resolved on the night before, when it was stopped by the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who rose to say that the king was himself coming to the Assembly. Mirabeau was in the tribune.² "The blood of our brothers flows in Paris," cried the orator; "let silent respect be the welcome given to the monarch by the representatives of a suffering people; the silence of the people is the lesson of kings."³ Deliberations ceased, the deputation, just about to leave the hall, waited, and addresses from various towns and communities full of loyalty to the Assembly were read to occupy the interval.

¹ See Flammermont, J., *La journée du 14 juillet, 1789*, cclix. and *Correspondance de Sillery*.

² The tribune was the raised platform from which the deputies spoke.

³ *Courrier de Provence, Dix-neuvième lettre.*

Presently the Grand Master of Ceremonies formally announced the king's approach, the deputation moved out into the court to receive him, and the Assembly continued to read. Accompanied only by his brothers, uncovered, without guard or ceremony, and amidst profound silence, the king entered the Salle des États. "Gentlemen," he said, "I called you here to consult on matters of the greatest importance to the State. No matter is more pressing, none touches my heart more than the frightful disorders in the capital. . . . I know that false rumours have been current, that men have even dared to say your persons were in danger. Need I reassure you on a point to which my own character gives the lie? On the contrary, it is I, who am one with the nation, who come to confide myself to your care, and to ask your help in securing the safety of the realm. The troops," added the king, "have been ordered to retire, and I authorise you to inform the capital of what I have said." The President rose to thank the king, and took this opportunity of once more praying for direct access to his person. This Louis promised; "Never," he said, "would he refuse to hear what the Assembly had to say."¹

At these words the silence of the deputies gave

¹ *Point du Jour*, No. 25, the best authority on the doings of the Assembly at this time.

way to a generous outburst ; the whole Assembly rose and conducted him to the Palace, forming such a guard of honour as Louis XVI. never had before or after, while, in a delirium of joy, the people shouted "*Vive le roi !*" The queen, with happy instinct, appeared on the balcony of the *cour royale*, her boy in her arms, and for her also the people shouted "*Vive la reine !*"

That same afternoon a deputation of forty members of the Assembly entered Paris bearing the message from the king. They were received in orderly fashion by the citizen-guard, which lined the streets of the capital. The people cried "*Vive la nation, vivent nos braves députés, vive le tiers-état !*" blessed, praised and caressed the deputies, who, leaving their carriages at the entrance to Paris, walked to the Hôtel de Ville. Nor was the king omitted from the praise, but was extolled as "Father of the Country." For the moment, king, Assembly and people were one.

The month of June had seen the king at issue with his States-General, and had seen him lose in the contest ; the month of July saw him at issue with his people, and saw them win. In both cases Louis had yielded before a will stronger than his own, and had received in return fresh assurance of the affection of the people—the King of France became the "Father of the Country." But if the

country was affectionate it was distrustful. Every new token of its affection was, as Lally-Tollendal a little later expressly intimates, but an attempt to secure the fidelity of the sovereign to the people's cause. France clung to her belief in her king's goodwill, but deemed it advisable to protect herself against his weakness. Thus when the Electors and citizens welcomed the deputies in the Hôtel de Ville, they at the same time strengthened the position of their *milice bourgeoise* and of their *comité permanent* by choosing Lafayette commander-in-chief of the one, and Bailly, as *Prévôt des Marchands*, head of the other. "Not *Prévôt des Marchands*," but "Mayor of Paris," someone cried, and the change of title and the nomination to these important offices were adopted without any reference to a king who had himself promised to appoint a commander-in-chief, and who had always nominated the *Prévôt des Marchands*.¹

Again, the National Assembly persisted in its right to a certain control over the ministers, and in this felt itself supported by the people. On the morning of the 16th, after its visit to Paris, it debated whether it could or could not demand the dismissal of the new ministers and the recall of Necker. The people had expressed their desire clearly enough; were the people to be obeyed?

¹ Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des Électeurs*, vol. i. p. 400.

Mirabeau contended that they had at least the right to make known "the opinion of our constituents"; Lally-Tollendal, by no means a revolutionary, went further. "Gentlemen," he said, "yesterday we heard in the streets, on the *quais*, in the squares one cry, a cry for the recall of Necker. The prayers of the people are our orders; we must demand his recall."¹

But before the Assembly had made its demand, a message came from the palace. The new ministers had resigned, and the king had agreed to recall Necker.

Again Louis had yielded; and, as if to emphasise the part which the desire of the Assembly had in his decision, he sent his letter of recall through its President. With the letter of the sovereign went one from the representatives of the nation; the "*Assemblée nationale*," it said, "prays you to accede to the desire of His Majesty."² It was, therefore, less by royal command than by that of the people that the king's minister returned.

At the same council which decided the fate of the ministry it was agreed that the king, accompanied by a deputation from the National Assembly, should visit Paris next day.

For this entry to his capital Louis prepared as

¹ *Point du Jour*, No. 26.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 245.

for a life or death ordeal. He saw his confessor, received the sacrament and appointed his eldest brother, the Comte de Provence, regent, should any mischance befall the king. The queen would have gone with her husband, but threats from the Palais-Royal and whispers from the Halles warned her not to increase the danger by her presence. Her fear was less for the life than for the liberty of the king. "They will not let him return," she said, and issued orders that her carriages should be ready in case of need.¹

There was no need. Lafayette and Bailly were alike determined that the king's entry should be a triumph, not for royalty, but for the city. At the *barrière* of the Point du Jour, Bailly, as Mayor of Paris, welcomed the king. He presented, as of old, the keys of the city, but with these words, "Sire, I bring you the keys of the good town of Paris; they are the same which were presented to Henry IV. He had reconquered his people; to-day it is the people who have reconquered their king."² From the Point du Jour to the Hôtel de Ville the king's carriage moved slowly. There was abundant time for him to see his conquerors, to realise the change from the brilliant monotony of the blue and red uniforms of the Swiss Guards and

¹ Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 33.

² Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux des électeurs*, vol. ii. p. 85.

Gardes Françaises to the dull variety of miscellaneous dress worn by the National Guard who lined his route. "I can," wrote the Marquis de Sillery to his constituents, "give you but a faint idea of the terrible yet majestic sight that greeted our eyes all the way from the Porte Chaillot to the Hôtel de Ville."¹—a city armed even to the religious orders, for Feuillants and Capucins carried halberds and waved flags.

And the manner in which Louis left Versailles showed that he on his part recognised changed relations between himself and his capital. He drove in a quiet carriage, accompanied by four nobles. His escort consisted of twelve of his bodyguards, and of the citizens of Versailles, formed like those of Paris into a *milice bourgeoise*. There were neither princes of the blood, ministers, heralds, trumpeters, nor parade of troops—it was as "Father of the Country," rather than "King of France," that Louis entered Paris. At the Hôtel de Ville he confirmed the powers assumed by the people, sanctioned the institution of the *milice bourgeoise*, the appointment of Lafayette and of Bailly, and adopted the new national badge, the red and blue cockade.² Then

¹ *Correspondance de Sillery*.

² After the king's visit, white, the colour of the cockades in the royal troops, was added to the blue and red substituted on July 13th for Camille Desmoulins' green. The tri-colour flag was not made obligatory in the navy until October 1790, nor in the army until June 1791.

broke out hearty cries of "Vive le roi!" the people covered the royal carriage, waiting in the court below, with ribbons and cockades, and as the king left the Hôtel de Ville, pressed about him, kissing his hand and even his garments. That night there were illuminations at the Hôtel de Ville in honour of the royal visit, but they cost less than those in honour of Necker's visit a fortnight later.¹

Thus in five days from the time the court party believed its triumph come, the King of France saw himself at his people's summons, recalling the ministers he had exiled, and withdrawing the troops he had collected. "It is for me alone to judge what measures are necessary for the safety of my capital," Louis had said on July 13th, and on the 17th he found himself in that capital surrounded by a guard it had organised, sanctioning the measures it had taken, wearing the badge it had adopted, and listening to words which sent a thrill through the citizens themselves. "Birth, Sire," said M. Moreau de Saint-Méry, spokesman for the *comité permanent*, "has set the crown upon your head; the will of the people keeps it there."² That the will of the people ceased by-and-by to keep it there was due, in great measure, to forces first brought into

¹ Bib. nat., Paris, MSS. fonds français, 11736, No. 9.

² *Correspondance de Sillery*. The *Arch. parl.* gives a more polite version; Sillery was a revolutionary, but an eye-witness.

activity by the events which ended in the fall of the Bastille.

By the evening of July 14th all the old authorities in Paris were gone—the *Prévôt des Marchands* lay dead, the Lieutenant-General of Police had resigned, the Intendant had fled, the Governor of Paris, responsible for the military control of the capital, had no troops to command, for these had either disbanded or been withdrawn. The new Minister of the King's Household, who was also Minister of Paris, had neither the power nor the desire to act. The *comité permanent*, acting as the executive of the Assembly of Electors, found itself the one responsible body in Paris; on it devolved the direction of the police, the providing of food, in short, the whole administration of the capital.¹

But the Electors and the *comité* did not feel they had any legal right to govern the city, and yet Paris must be governed. They, therefore, changed the name of their *comité* from "*permanent*" to "*provisoire*," accepted, in the meantime, the charge thrust upon them, and debated how best to secure powers.

As a first step, Bailly and Lafayette asked the districts to confirm their powers, and this done, Bailly asked each district to elect two deputies to confer with him on a plan of municipal organisation

¹ For formation of the municipality see Lacroix, S., *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. i., Introduction.

to be submitted to the districts for their approval.¹ By this act Bailly had no intention of setting aside the *comité provisoire*. He meant to continue the administration of the city by the *comité* and to restrict the duty of the new delegates, one hundred and twenty in all, to that of a deliberative council occupied solely in preparing a charter of the municipal liberty recovered by Paris, after which it was to dissolve.

But the districts did not leave this point to be decided by Bailly. Summoned by the parish crier and his drum, the citizens thronged to the district churches. There was no distinction of Orders now. Clergy, nobles, and Third Estate met together to choose delegates, not of Orders, but of citizens. Interested, elated, and conscious of their power, they went beyond Bailly's request, and commissioned their delegates not only to draw up a plan of municipal government, but while doing so to undertake also the administration of the city.

On the 25th of July the newly-elected delegates—the *Assemblée des Représentants de la Commune de Paris*²—met in the Salle des Gouverneurs in the

¹ Until lately only one copy of the letter Bailly wrote to the districts which was known to exist, that in the Bibliothèque Carnavalet, Paris, but another has been found in B. M. P., *Municipalité*, R. 225.

² This first *Assemblée des Représentants de la Commune de Paris*, consisting of 120 members, was replaced on September 18th by another consisting of five members from each district, which was known as the "Three Hundred," and had a *Conseil de Ville* of 60 members

Hôtel de Ville, and the government of the capital passed from crown officials and privileged persons to the freely-elected *bourgeoisie* of Paris.

So untried a body as that of the new Commune of Paris was not, of course, without faults. Some of these belonged to the temper of its members, others to the nature of its constitution. "Gently, gently, Messieurs the Parisians," writes a pamphleteer to the districts of Paris in the autumn of 1789, "your favourite sin, may it not displease you, is to reply before listening, to judge before hearing."¹

But granting defects, granting mistakes, the fact remains that with the institution of a municipality of Paris the whole history of France was changed. For what had begun in the capital was followed throughout the country, and in a surprisingly short time France found herself possessed of "thirty thousand communes united as one nation under the sovereignty of the people of France. The municipal revolution established in France a republican state of things."² For from first to last the municipalities

charged with executing its decisions. This lasted until October 1790, when it was replaced by a municipality chosen according to laws decreed in May and June 1790. The two first took their powers from the districts only, since the National Assembly had not then voted the decrees on the municipalities of France. The third, that dating from October 1790, was the first legally constituted municipality.

¹ B. M. P., *Districts*, R. 229, *Le tambour des districts de Paris*.

² Aulard, *Histoire politique*, p. 39.

looked for their authority to the people. By the people they were elected, to the people they submitted their proposals, from the representatives of the people they received their final sanction. And for this France, for good or evil, had to thank the capital.

Side by side with the municipality sprang up the National Guard of Paris, which was but the development of the *milice bourgeoise*, and whose organisation was strictly based on the districts. Each district was required to furnish a battalion consisting of six hundred men. Of these only one hundred in each battalion were paid. These were called the *compagnies du centre*, and as far as possible were composed of trained troops taken from the old Gardes Françaises, and from regulars who deserted from the army in order to join the National Guard. These paid companies formed the nucleus of the National Guard, and were known as the *garde nationale soldée*, or paid, in distinction from the much larger volunteer *garde non soldée*, or unpaid.¹

Just as France followed Paris in respect to municipal life, she followed her also in respect to a National Guard. Wherever a municipality sprang up there sprang up also a National Guard. The citizens who organised these new institutions were not rebels; they were, on the contrary, grateful

¹ For interesting details on the formation of the National Guard see Lacroix, S., *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. i. *passim*.

subjects of a "citizen king." But whereas before the fall of the Bastille there was only a National Assembly which looked to the nation for its powers, after it there was also a national system of municipalities, served and protected by a National Guard, which did the same.

Nor was this the only way by which the capture of the Bastille weakened the Crown. On the evening of the 14th of July the Palais-Royal issued a list of those whose lives it chose to consider forfeited by treachery to their country. The list was a bold one, and included the Comte d'Artois, the Polignacs, Breteuil, Broglie, and even the queen herself.¹ It was, of course, a mere threat, but the doings of the day gave it an ominous significance and the Court was alarmed. During the next three days Artois, the Polignacs, the Duc de Condé, cousin of the king—a determined supporter of the old regime, the ministers who had concurred in the dismissal of Necker, the Prince de Lambesc and the Maréchal de Broglie, who had commanded the troops, left Versailles. "The queen," wrote Mercy to the Emperor Joseph on July 23rd, "has yielded to public opinion and sent away her favourite advisers . . . would to God she had done it long ago."²

¹ B. M. P., *Pamphlets politiques et satiriques*, F.R. 352, *Jugement national*.

² Arneth, *Correspondance secrète entre le comte de Mercy-Argenteau et l'empereur Joseph II.*, vol. ii. p. 258.

3^eme Division

1^{re}me Bataillon

BREVET.

Donné à Paris le 10 août 1793

Army d'émancipation
Le 10 août 1793

Vous, Soussignés, certifiez que
Monsieur Julien, Le Gallois, des circonscriptions de Paris, âgé de 38 ans, taille de 5 p. 4 p. 6, s'est enrôlé pour servir dans la Garde Nationale Parisienne, en qualité de Grenadier Volontaire.
Pourquoi nous avons délivré le présent Brevet pour lui servir de que de raison. Délivré au Bureau des Brevets
à Paris, ce dix-neuf juin 1793

JE VEULE POUR LA PATRIE.

Vu par Nous Commandant de Bataillon.

Vu par Nous Aide-Major.

Vu par Nous Cap.

De Moutpied

ff. 113

Pétier de la Croix

COMMISSION OF A 'GRENADEIR VOLONTAIRE' OF THE NATIONAL

'Collection Hennin,' Bibliothèque Nationale (Estampes), Paris,



But Mercy did not foresee that the pernicious counsellors of whom the queen was relieved only left Versailles to exercise, if possible, a more pernicious influence elsewhere. From this first exodus, which left Marie-Antoinette so lonely in her palace, sprang the party of the *émigrés*—a party which was to intrigue and boast and menace, to drag the king's name into actions which he disavowed, to separate by every possible means the cause of royalty from that of reform, thereby deepening every division that came between the king and his people. Meantime, the queen herself remained at Versailles, with her proud brave spirit and her narrow-minded policy, and no misfortune enlightened the dull intellect of the king.

On July 16th an order was signed by the *comité permanent* at Paris, and by Lafayette as commander of the *milice bourgeoise*, for the demolition of the Bastille. The fortress was one of the king's most famous prisons, but he was not consulted. A little later he was told that the order had been given. "This is too much," he said in sudden indignation; then added in a different tone, "but since it is considered necessary, let it be."¹ An angry protest, the initiative left to others, an impotent acquiescence—this was how the Father of the Country met and coped with a great revolution!

¹ Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 57.

CHAPTER X.

LOUIS, RESTORER OF FRENCH LIBERTY.



MEDAL STRUCK TO COMMEMORATE
THE EVENTS OF JULY.

THE fall of the Bastille ended what has been called the first period of the Revolution;—a period during which the Third Estate fought for and obtained political rights equal with those of the privileged Orders. This was all it had directly striven

for, but the opposition of the privileged, the intrigues of the Court and the indecision of the king had resulted in concessions which virtually made the Third Estate, and especially that portion of it known as the *haute bourgeoisie*, ruler of France. The second period, that between the fall of the Bastille and the removal of the king and Assembly to Paris, saw the law sanction the authority already assumed by the representatives of the people. In other words, it saw the framing of the Declaration

of Rights and of the fundamental bases of the Constitution of France. Here let us pause for a moment and see what changes had come about, since the king had set all France ablaze by his promise, in August 1788, to convoke his States-General for the following May.

And first, the States-General themselves had disappeared and a National Assembly was in their place. This in itself was a portentous change, for, by the first term, the king meant subjects summoned by himself to make known to him the complaints of his people and to confer on the proposals he laid before them; by the second the Third Estate meant a body of men met to carry out the wishes of the nation with the concurrence of the king, if possible, but without it, if need be.

It is very remarkable how, with the disappearance of the term "States-General," all that was most significant in the old regime disappears also. Hitherto, ministers, parlements, privilege had been the great factors with which history had to deal, now they sank to a secondary place, and the last two all but vanished.

The popularity of the Parlement of Paris fell when it opposed its will to that of the people on the question of vote by Order or by head; but its significance, and that of all the parlements, was virtually destroyed when the States-General became

the National Assembly. The functions of the parlements were three-fold¹—that of registering edicts issued by the king in Council, that of exercising what was known as *haute justice*, and that of Supreme Courts of Justice. In old days no edict was legal until registered by the Parlement of Paris, and, if of local application, by the provincial parlement to whose province it applied. Now, the National Assembly, claiming for itself legislative powers, voted decrees, and no decree became law until the king performed the function of his ancient parlements and sanctioned the laws his people made. Nor was there any longer occasion for the exercise of *haute justice*—that is, supervision by the parlements of all the subordinate courts and institutions of the kingdom. Henceforth such institutions looked to the National Assembly for regulation and supervision.

And even as Courts of Justice the days of the parlements were numbered, for on November 3rd the Assembly placed all the parlements *en vacance*—that is, suspended their sittings, and allowed only their inferior courts, the *chambres de vacation*, to exercise jurisdiction until such time as it could reorganise the whole administration of justice. With this decree the parlements, though not yet abolished, ceased to be a power in France.

¹ See Monin, H., *L'état de Paris en 1789*.

As remarkable, though less conspicuous, was the change in the position of ministers. Nothing had happened outwardly to effect this change. The life at the Château of Versailles went on as usual. There was no relaxation of etiquette. Councils met at stated times, weekly or oftener. Ministers had their portfolios, their control of their own departments, as before. And yet the change in the government was profound. When Necker was dismissed from Versailles on July 11th, he was undoubtedly the most influential man in France; a month later he was little more than a useful servant.

He had returned from Basle like a Roman conqueror, but he had returned to find his glory departed. The very people who had risen in rebellion because Necker was exiled had no longer the same need of him. The king had acknowledged the National Assembly; he had gone into its midst with "the trustfulness of a father"; he had asked its help in putting right the evils of the State, and to the National Assembly, willingly or unwillingly, Louis was henceforth bound.

In old days ministers were responsible only to the king, and each one stood alone at the head of his own *département*. Now they were held responsible to the National Assembly, and were obliged to work more or less in concert with, if not in sub-

mission to, its committees.¹ Seats were reserved for them in the Salle des États, and they were expected to go to the Assembly and explain to it any proposals they wished embodied in decrees, but they were allowed no vote on its debates.

Before the all-grasping sovereignty of the National Assembly, parlements declined and ministers became unimportant ; but the fall of privilege, although contemporaneous with their decline, was due to other causes than the ascendancy of the representatives of the people. It was, indeed, directly traceable to the disturbances which spread throughout the country immediately after the fall of the Bastille.

That event brought after it a period of great unrest. There was a vague uneasiness lest the fugitive princes should return at the head of an army and attack France, and there was also what was known as the "great fear"—a sudden strange terror of unruly savage hordes, brigands as they were called, who were believed to burn castles,

¹ In July a *Comité des Finances* was formed, which concerned itself with loans, taxes, etc., and which appointed a sub-committee of twelve for the express purpose of corresponding and consulting with Necker. By October we find a *Comité Militaire* and a *Comité de la Marine*, whose duty it was to confer with the ministers of war and of the marine, while the business formerly entrusted to the Minister of the King's Household was now in great measure performed by committees on agriculture, on crown lands, etc. Finally a *Comité de Legislation criminelle* undertook that reform of justice, which in other days had come from the king and his chancellor. See *Décrets du 14 juillet, 1 octobre, 5 octobre, 14 septembre, 1789.*

destroy crops, and swoop down on towns and villages. How these reports grew is hard to say, for no one ever saw the brigands. "On the afternoon of July 25th," says a local history of Soissons, "a messenger arrived, bringing news that a group of brigands had the night before cut down the corn at Béthisy"; hour by hour other messengers came saying that the brigands had reached Villers-Cotteret, Pierrefonds, Attichy; that they were four thousand strong, and had grown bold enough to cut the corn in daylight; but they never reached Soissons.¹ It was the same everywhere, rumours abundant, a dread fear, but no brigands. This much only was certain. The disorders committed in Paris on the 13th and 14th of July were largely due to desperate men, who had been expelled from the capital. This fact, it was believed, was taken advantage of by the enemies of the new regime, who, "disappointed of preventing the establishment of liberty by the violence of despotism," in other words by the troops concentrated round the capital, "now attempted to reach the same end by exciting disorder and anarchy" in the provinces.²

It was an easy task; privilege had made itself hateful in the land, and in the châteaux of the nobles lay the charters which authorised the usages of

¹Jacob, P. L., *Histoire de Soissons*, vol. ii., Appendice, p. 8.

²*Décret pour le rétablissement de la tranquillité publique, juillet, 1789.*

privilege, and rendered the people its slaves. The emissaries of the counter-revolution, whose interest it was to sow disorder in the land, had but to whisper the rumour that brigands sent by the aristocrats were cutting down the people's corn, and popular credulity did the rest. The people armed themselves, châteaux were attacked and charters burned, riot and disorder spread abroad; the Bastille had fallen, why should not all centres of ancient despotism fall too?

To stop such direful deeds and restore order to the distracted land, some step must be taken. On July 22nd Foulon, the three days' Minister of Finance, and Berthier, his son-in-law, were murdered in Paris, and next day the National Assembly met, disturbed and uneasy. It was natural enough, perhaps inevitable, that riot and even murder should accompany the first effervescence of revolt, but that it should occur after the king had sent away the troops, recalled the popular ministers, and himself visited Paris as the Father of the Country was another thing.

If such deeds continued to be perpetrated, barbarity would become a habit, and the people would become accustomed to scenes of blood.¹ A proclamation, therefore, was issued inviting the people to maintain order, to have confidence in their king

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 265, Speech of Gouy d'Arcy.

and in their deputies, and to respect the laws without which true liberty was impossible. The proclamation did little good. "It was," says the historian Droz, "only a cold invitation to keep the peace instead of a forcible command."¹ The fear of the capital was upon the Salle des États, and men were afraid of speaking too strongly lest they should seem to reflect on the conquerors of the Bastille.² Disorder, riot, seizure of grain, attacks on the châteaux were little affected, if at all, by the proclamation of July.

On the 4th of August the Assembly proposed to take stronger measures and to assert emphatically that, until it had made new laws and imposed less onerous taxes, the old laws, old taxes, and old penalties would be enforced. The disturbances which had followed the fall of the Bastille were preventing the deputies from carrying out the work they were elected to do—they were hindering the making of a Constitution and they must end. On this the Vicomte de Noailles rose to speak. How remedy the evil, he asked, without first remedying its cause? Disturbances came from village communities who cared nothing about the Constitution, but had in their *cahiers* asked relief from indirect taxation and from seignorial rights.

¹ Droz, J., *Histoire du règne de Louis XVI.*, bk. x. p. 315.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 253, Speech of Robespierre, 20 juillet.

Let them have it.¹ He was followed by the Duc d'Aiguillon, who moved that pecuniary exemptions of every kind should be abolished; and presently by Leguen de Kérangal, a Breton Deputy. Dressed in the peasant costume of his province, rich in Breton eloquence, this man drew a vivid picture of the wrongs inflicted by the charters of the seigneurs. "Gentlemen," he cried, "which of us would not make an expiatory faggot of those infamous parchments which humiliate humanity?" He declared that until that "devouring monster, feudalism," was destroyed, punishment for the infringement of order was unjust. "When he sat down," says the official record, "enthusiasm filled every soul."²

One after another, noble, prelate, lawyer, parish priest, all who had themselves anything to renounce, or who could renounce for others, whether consulted or not, entered on a frenzy of self-sacrifice. The Marquis de Foucault proposed the abolition of military pensions, the Vicomte de Beauharnais was ready to open ecclesiastical and military rank to all classes, the Duc de Châtelet to convert tithes into a money payment, and the Bishop of Chartres to renounce the privilege of the chase.

¹ See on 4th of August, *Le Point du Jour*, No. 44, and *Courrier de Provence*, 22nd letter; also *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 343 seq.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 346.

In one night privilege, which for hundreds of years had lain at the root of French politics and French society, was destroyed.

With the destruction of privilege the great social land-marks passed away; the exclusive right of gentlemen to hunt and to keep pigeons and rabbit-warrens was abolished; any citizen might be admitted to any civil or military post. The remains of feudalism were done away with; serfdom and the right of a *seigneur* to exact dues at the death of a tenant were totally abolished; so also were the seignorial courts in which the seigneurs had the right of judging their own peasants; and the tantalising tyranny which exacted dues at every possible point, obliged the peasants to grind their corn, bake their bread, press their wine in their lord's mill, oven or wine press, might now be avoided by a small payment of money. All venal and treaty privileges were destroyed. The right of the Crown to make money by the sale of posts was taken away, and privileges belonging to special provinces and special towns were removed. Finally, the Church yielded her right to tithes—a tax which often deprived the agriculturalist of a third of his income—consenting to receive in its stead a money contribution more equally levied.

All this done, the Assembly decreed that a medal should be struck “to render eternal” the memory

of this day, that a solemn *Te Deum* be sung, and that a deputation should wait upon the king to convey to him the homage of the Assembly and to offer him the title of "Restorer of French Liberty."¹ So died privilege, before the making of the Constitution was yet begun.

To this work the Assembly now set itself. On the 27th of June the States-General had become the National Assembly. The Assembly spent its first sittings in arranging for the conduct of its business, and in receiving congratulatory addresses. It was the 6th of July before it had appointed a committee to draw up a project of Constitution. On the 12th broke out the disorders consequent on Necker's dismissal, and with the disturbances arose an even keener desire than before to hasten the work of the Constitution. On the 14th, while the deputies were waiting for news from Paris, a second committee was appointed to examine the *cahiers* and deduce from them those constitutional principles on which the *cahiers* were agreed; but it was not until July 27th that its report was read to the National Assembly.

It found eleven points on which the *cahiers* agreed and five of these related to the monarchy. These were that the French Government is a

¹ See *Col. gen. des décrets*, vol. i. p. 51, *Arrêté du 4 août, pour la suppression de plusieurs droits et privilèges*.

monarchy—that the person of its king is inviolable and sacred—that his crown is hereditary from male to male—that he is the depository of executive power, and that his sanction is necessary for the promulgation of the laws. The others were as follows:—Responsibility of ministers, laws to be made by the representatives of the nation with the sanction of the king ; national consent necessary to taxes and to loans ; the taxes imposed by one meeting of the States-General to last only until the convocation of another ; property and individual liberty to be held sacred.¹

Now, the temper of the National Assembly, as well as that of Paris, was becoming increasingly revolutionary. Pleading for firm dealing with disorder was met, as we have seen, by the cry of “Who would punish the defenders of the country?” Solemn masses were sung in one district of Paris after another for the souls of the heroes of the Bastille, and *Te Deums* raised to thank God for the fall of despotism. The Palais-Royal acted as a kind of Greek chorus to the doings of the Assembly, interpreting, approving, or disapproving its resolutions, and all this had an undeniable influence on the representatives of the people. It may then be assumed that the Assembly would not grant more to the principles of monarchy than the united voices

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. viii. p. 284.

of the people had demanded. This report, therefore, may be regarded as the level at which the ebbing tide of monarchy now stood.

On the 1st of August Mounier opened the debate on the Constitution. The first point to be decided was whether a Declaration of Rights should follow or precede the Articles of Constitution. The point was more important than is evident at first sight. "It was," says M. Aulard, "in no spirit of childish pedantry that the *comité de constitution* suggested placing the Declaration before the Act of Constitution." The theories to be subscribed to in the Declaration went beyond what could be embodied in an Act of Government. But the Assembly had just escaped a grave danger—the 1st of August was but two weeks distant from the 14th of July—and the deputies "were less concerned in drawing up a Declaration of Rights which could be immediately put into practice than in shutting the door once and for ever on the old regime."¹ This is why, in spite of arguments which pointed out that laws when made must modify "natural rights," the suggestion made by the *comité de constitution* was adopted, and the Assembly decided to draw up a Declaration of Rights before it discussed the principles of the Constitution.

Meantime the distracted state of France, the

¹ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique*, p. 39 seq.

business of revising the resolutions taken on the 4th of August, and the desperate condition of the Treasury once more interrupted the work of Constitution-making.

Just a year before, the difficulties of finance had driven the king to fix a meeting of the States-General; the States-General had met, had become a National Assembly, and the position of the Treasury was still "alarming." For the rapid changes already brought about had disorganised society, and the knowledge that no new taxes would be imposed without consent of the nation was too often interpreted into a reason for the non-payment of any taxes at all. Bureaux of tax-collectors were robbed, registers of tax-payers destroyed, refusals of payment were numerous, and delay universal. At the same time the resolutions of the 4th of August put an end to the sale of offices, that substantial source of revenue to the Crown. In fact, the old sources of revenue were perceptibly diminishing, and until the Constitution was made, the *cahiers* forbade the deputies to provide new.

Necker, however, could not wait for the Constitution. For a year the question of finance had been in abeyance; the form in which the States-General should be convoked, the struggle between the Crown and the Assembly had absorbed both government and nation, and Necker, single-handed,

had been forced to keep the Treasury supplied. He could do so no longer, and on August 7th he went to the Salle des États and asked it to do that which the *cahiers* forbade, and sanction a loan of thirty million livres.

By so doing he placed the Assembly in a serious dilemma ; but as France held herself responsible for the debt, and money must be had, it was agreed that the Assembly must not be held back by the *cahiers*. The loan was voted, but to lessen the liabilities the deputies, without consulting Necker lowered the interest from five per cent. to four and a half ; consequently the loan failed,¹ and the business of making a Constitution which should admit of new taxation became more urgent than ever.

By the 26th of August a Declaration of Rights was drawn up, of which the following articles are the most important :—That all men are born and remain free and equal ; that sovereignty resides in the nation ; that government exists to secure man's right to liberty, security, and property, and also to resist tyranny ; that all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law, consequently the abolition of all Orders and corporations, as well as the liberty of worship and of the press were declared.²

Having thus drawn up an essentially republican

¹ *Le Point du Jour*, No. 47 and 48.

² For full text see *Archives parlementaires*, vol. ix. p. 236.

Declaration, the Assembly proceeded to lay down the bases of monarchical government. As yet "the ridiculous idea of converting the kingdom into a Republic"¹ had not even occurred to the deputies. The rights of the citizens were secured, and the whole discussion on the principles of French government was conducted on the assumption that that government must be a Monarchy. But before actually decreeing the continuance of a Monarchy, the Assembly wished to safe-guard itself as to the character of its Monarchy, and so discussed three preliminary questions. These were, whether the Assembly should be permanent, that is, meet regularly as a matter of course, whether it should have one or two Chambers, and what control the king might exercise over its decrees—in other words, the question of the veto.

By an immense majority the permanence of the Assembly was decreed on September 9th. On the same day the deputies entered on the discussion as to the number of Chambers, but on this point there was great divergence of opinion. Mirabeau, Mounier, Clermont-Tonnerre, Lally-Tollendal and others who had hitherto been leaders in the Assembly, were in favour of a plan analogous to that of our English House of Commons and House

¹ *Opinion de Rabaut Saint-Etienne le 1 septembre 1789, Procès-verbal de l'assemblée constituante.*

of Lords. They feared the effect of a single legislative Chamber, and foresaw in it a new tyranny, "since despotism must arise when either an individual or a collective body believes that the law depends on its will alone."¹ But they argued in vain; the supporters of a double Chamber numbered only eighty-nine.

The result was a deep disappointment to the moderate party, and Mounier, Clermont-Tonnerre and Lally-Tollendal resigned their seats in the *comité de constitution*. Although the decision is generally considered a mistaken one, it must be remembered that to most men a second Chamber threatened a revival of those Orders, which the Third Estate had fought so hard to suppress, and of that privilege to which the self-sacrifice of the fourth of August had dealt the death-blow. And the deputies were influenced also by that logical idealism, if one may so express it, so characteristic of French thought; "One God, one king, one Assembly," cried Rabaut Saint-Etienne, the Protestant pastor, and carried with him the great body of his hearers.²

But if the question of a single or double chamber most deeply excited the Assembly, that of the veto most affected the people. The debate on the

¹ Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 126.

² Droz, J., *Histoire du règne de Louis XVI.*, bk. x. p. 326 seq.

principles of the monarchy began on the 28th of August, and on Sunday the 30th there was disturbance in Paris.

In accordance with its plan of discussing all motions brought before the National Assembly, the Palais-Royal took up this question of the veto. It prepared a motion of its own to be sent to the districts of Paris, and to the provinces of the kingdom, by which it declared that the veto belonged not to one man, but to twenty-five millions, and it condemned as ignorant and corrupt those deputies who maintained that their *cahiers* enjoined a power of absolute veto by the king. At the same time it drew up a letter to the President of the Assembly informing him that if those members of the clergy, nobles and commons, who wished for an absolute veto continued to disturb the harmony of the Assembly, "fifteen thousand men were ready to light up their châteaux and their homes."¹

Ushered in by such incidents as these, the debate began. Mirabeau and those anxious for a double Chamber were in favour of an absolute veto, that is, the right of the king to refuse altogether to promulgate a law should he think fit. Mirabeau did not believe that the king would dare to exercise the veto unless the people were with him, and he wished, as has been well said, "to give the nation,

¹ See *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. i. p. 413.

through the king, the power of checking its own representatives.”¹ The Palais-Royal, on the contrary, and several of the provinces, notably Brittany did not wish the king to possess any veto at all; they were ready to commit all legislation to an unbridled Assembly. Finally, a middle course was proposed, by which the king might suspend a law during two sittings of the National Assembly, after which, if the Assembly still wished the law promulgated, the king must yield.

On the 11th of September this limited veto known as the *veto suspensif*, was decreed by six hundred and seventy-three to three hundred and twenty-five votes. On September 22nd, exactly three years before the proclamation of a Republic, France was declared a Monarchy; on October 1st the nineteen articles which limited the Monarchy were drawn up; a few days later the newly “constituted” monarch became virtually the prisoner of his people.

¹ Stephens, H. Morse, *History of the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. 220.

CHAPTER XI.

“TO VERSAILLES!”



A FLAG OF THE NATIONAL GUARD
OF PARIS

WHEN on August 26th, 1789, the National Assembly decreed the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and on October 1st voted the first nineteen articles of the Constitution, it had laid, as it believed, the sure foundations of French liberty. There was much

yet to be done, but liberty was secure, and order and prosperity, it was argued, must follow. France had in truth effected a mighty deed. She had substituted the principle of equality of rights for that of privilege of class, she had changed the divine right of kings into the sovereignty of the people. She had begun a process which ended in the revolutionising of every institution in the land, but

she had hardly counted the cost. For France was singularly unprepared for democratic institutions. Accustomed to censorship of the press, to crowd regulations which penetrated into every grade and calling of life, to a University system which jealously guarded every innovation on, or criticism of, Church and State, to a central government whose representative sat *ex-officio* at every parish meeting, to parlements coerced by royal troops, to imprisonment at the royal word—the citizens of France had little experience in matters of administration !

At the same time the men called upon to replace the old authorities were well versed in the writers of political liberty, and their very inexperience permitted them unbounded faith in theory, and led to license of innovation. France was to them a divinity fresh-risen from the sea, too beautiful, too wonderful to be trammelled or defiled by aught that was old. And yet, when it came to practical administration the theorists were forced to turn to laws enacted under the old regime, and to officials trained in the old methods. Thus arose a contradiction which was in itself a source of unrest, since to a system of government based on democratic principles was added an administration too often characterised by autocratic methods. The order and prosperity so much hoped for did not return ; disquiet in the provinces, distress in the capital, continued and on

October 5th an outburst occurred which swept from Versailles king, court and ministers ; which left the great Château deserted, the government offices empty, the Salle des États silent and neglected.

For some time the more moderate among the deputies had been disquieted by the growing influence of the capital on the National Assembly. They had seen the Assembly moved by the Palais-Royal, and they feared for its independence, and in September the proposal of removing court and Assembly to a town farther from Paris than Versailles was made by the men who in July had rejected a similar proposal with scorn. Then, the vicinity of Paris was a safeguard to the Assembly, now, it was regarded by many as a danger. But to this scheme the king in his turn refused to listen ; he declared that removal would be interpreted as flight, and always chivalrous to his idea of duty, held to his determination not to leave Versailles.¹ But the fact that such a proposal had been made became known, and Paris grew uneasy ; the last thing she wished was to see her king and the representatives of the nation escape from her control.

Just at this crisis incidents occurred at Versailles that shook the confidence which Louis, as “Father of the Country,” and “Restorer of French Liberty,”

¹ There were two proposals ; one from the Royalists, who suggested Metz, as near the frontier, and another from the Constitutionalists, who wished only to avoid the influence of Paris.

was regaining, and confirmed the fear of counter-revolution plots. The movement in the Palais-Royal on August 30th, and symptoms of restlessness on the part of the Gardes Françaises in Paris alarmed the court; an extra regiment, that of Flanders, was summoned towards the end of September to Versailles.¹ It was customary in the French army to give a dinner to any regiment which had just entered a town, and on the 1st of October the royal troops resident at Versailles entertained the officers of the regiment of Flanders to a dinner reputed to cost twenty-six livres per head, exclusive of wine, lights and glass.² It was not a great sum, but the people of Paris were nearly starving, and the feasting did not end here. Four hundred bottles of wine were left over from the banquet, and to use these a breakfast was given on October 3rd, to which were invited soldiers of the National Guard of Versailles, as well as of the new regiment. Bottles were broken, wine spilt, a general sense of profusion and of waste conveyed, which the patriotic journalists took care to emphasise. On the 4th there was still another feast.³

¹ See on whole incident, Le Roi, J. A., *Histoire de Versailles*, vol. ii. p. 35 *seq.*

² B. M. P., *Cinq et six Octobre*, F. 490-2, *Déclaration par Lecointre, Procédure du Châtelet.*

³ Le Roi, *Histoire de Versailles*, vol. ii. p. 43; and Gorsas, *Courrier de Versailles.*

All this might have passed, but there were rumours that on October 1st the nation's health had not been drunk, that the national badge had been insulted, and that these things had occurred under the auspices of royalty itself. There had been difficulty in finding a suitable hall for the banquet of the 1st of October, and the officers had asked and obtained leave to use the Salle de l'Opéra, at the end of the north wing of the palace. The theatre was prettily decorated for the occasion, the scene a lively one; and a lady-in-waiting suggested that Marie-Antoinette should go to the royal box and look on, for the queen was anxious and depressed, and the sight, it was thought, would cheer her. For a time she refused, but her ladies said it would please the little Dauphin,¹ and the mother yielded; just then the king returned from the hunt and accompanied them.² From the royal box the party made their way to the orchestra, and walked round the banqueting tables erected on the stage. They were joyously welcomed, the soldiers sang, “O Richard, O mon roi,” and Marie-Antoinette, conscious of her unpopularity, and feeling herself once more in an atmosphere of loyal affection, left the hall cheered in spirit. “All,” wrote Lecointre, a

¹ Louis-Charles, Duc de Normandie, second son of Louis XVI., born 1785.

² Rocheterie, Maxime de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 48 *seq.*

well-known draper of Versailles, and an officer in the National Guard, "was quite orderly until the Court left."¹ Then the whole assembly broke up and hurried to the Cour de Marbre below the windows of the king's apartments. There, excited by wine and by the enthusiasm of the moment, the officers of the Body-Guard took from their hats the white cockades, still worn by the royal troops, and offered them to their guests of the National Guard, who were foolish enough to accept. Three days later, Lecointre, who had business at the palace, saw court ladies walking in the great gallery to which the public was admitted, carrying white cockades and offering them to the people with the words, "Take care of them; this is the colour which will triumph."² And while royal troops and court ladies offered royalist cockades, the king hesitated to sign the Declaration of Rights and the Articles of the Constitution. Need one wonder if the citizens in the capital looked askance at the doings of Versailles?

Meantime Paris was growing more and more hungry. If one turns to the list of daily events given by Lacretelle in his *Précis*,³ we find such entries as these: "July 28th, famine in Paris:" "August 28th, famine increases:" "September 17th, famine increases:" "October 3rd, famine very

¹ B. M. P., F. 490-2, *Déclaration par Lecointre*.

² *Id.*

³ *Précis historique de la Révolution française*, vol. i., p. xi. *Assemblée constituante*.

great.” The government worked loyally with the municipality to feed the capital; it bought great quantities of corn, which it sold below cost price; it co-operated with Paris in providing work for the unemployed, paying more than twelve thousand men tenpence a day; yet week by week the hunger grew.

On October 5th the *Chronique de Paris* commented on the mischief caused by rumours current among the people. These were, that certain mills were ceasing to grind corn, that the supply of flour was exhausted, that the bread sold was dangerous to health, and that the royal military school was storing up the flour so necessary for the people's food. That same morning the women of Paris rose. They had received rice instead of bread, and they had stood patiently *en queue* at the bakers' shops, sometimes the whole day long;¹ but they would be patient no longer, and at six o'clock on the morning of October 5th, they met at the Porte Saint-Antoine. For generations they had been accustomed to carry petitions to their sovereign, and they would do so now. Seizing a drum from a guard-house near the Halles, a young woman beat on it sharply, called out, “To Versailles!” and summoned her sisters to join her. But first, with a certain civic and orderly instinct, the women determined to go to the Hôtel

¹ Ferrières, marquis de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 267.

de Ville, see the Mayor, and obtain his sanction for their project. Neither Mayor nor Councillors had arrived,¹ but Maillard, an usher of the Châtelet and a "conqueror of the Bastille," happening to be at the Hôtel de Ville, bethought himself of organising and commanding the troops of women bent on going to Versailles. He too seized a drum, and beating it on the Place de Grève, proposed that the hungry women should go to the National Assembly and get what redress they could. Maillard was known and trusted, the women accepted him as their chief, agreed on the Champs Elysées as a *rendez-vous*, and sent detachments to summon all the *citoyennes* they could find to assemble there.²

It was no easy task which Maillard had taken upon himself. A mob of about six thousand women, hungry and excited, was not easy to control. We do not hear that they did, or wished to do, much harm, but the news of their coming struck terror in the hearts of the villages through which they passed, for they carried flails, pikes, swords, and muskets and were preceded by drums, and two cannon though these were without ammunition. All the shops

¹ See Lacroix, S., *Actes de la commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 166 n.; also Bailly et Duveyrier, *Procès-verbaux de l'Assemblée des Électeurs* (B. M. P., F. 607-10), and *Journal de Paris*, Nos. 283, 284.

² B. M. P., 490-2, *Déposition de Maillard*. See on the women at Versailles, Le Roi's careful account in his *Histoire de Versailles*, vol. ii. p. 53 seq., and the *Mémoires* of Mounier.

on their route shut before they arrived. The women knocked at the doors of the bakers' shops and asked for food and drink, and when these were not to be had, tore down the "lying" sign-boards.

Before they reached Versailles, Maillard harangued his followers. He persuaded them to send the two menacing, if useless, cannon to the rear, and impressed upon them that they must enter Versailles gaily, and not alarm its inhabitants; and so well did he succeed that the women, shouting "*Vive Henry IV., vive le roi,*" as they walked up the Avenue de Paris, were answered by, "*Vivent nos Parisiennes.*"¹

At the Salle des États the procession halted. It had reached its ostensible destination, and Maillard asked permission to enter with a deputation of the women and address the Assembly. As he waited, his followers scattered, and some, passing by the Rue Saint-Martin invaded the Salle by the Rue des Chantiers, so that instead of receiving one small deputation the Assembly found itself flooded by a mob. "They had come," said Maillard, "for bread, and to punish the Body-Guards who had insulted the tri-coloured cockade. All men were brothers, but nevertheless every brother must be compelled to wear the national cockade."² In these words he announced

¹ B. M. P., F. 490-2, *Déposition de Maillard*.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. ix. p. 346.

a doctrine of which France was to hear much, that of "the right of liberty" to be despotic for the sake of enforcing equality, a confusion of thought to which much of the later anarchy was due. Mounier, President for the fortnight, replied that no man had a right to force another, and warned Maillard and his followers to be respectful in their behaviour to the Assembly.

But the women, caring little for side issues and speaking all at once, interrupted and loudly demanded bread for their city of Paris. In vain the Assembly declared its anxiety to secure this, and repeated the story of the efforts it had made. "That is not enough," muttered the women, and insisted on accompanying a deputation which the Assembly had just decided to send to the king. To this, on condition that only six of the twenty chosen to accompany the deputation should enter the palace, the Assembly agreed.

Meantime, the Municipality of Versailles, warned by that of Paris, had taken measures to preserve order and guard the palace, and by three o'clock the Body-Guard, the regiment of Flanders and the National Guard of Versailles had taken up their posts in the Cour des Ministres, and on the Place d'Armes in front of the palace. An hour later those of the women who had not halted at the Salle des États reached the Place d'Armes, bereft of their leader and followed at a little distance by a mob

of Paris ruffians. These now joined the women at the Place d'Armes, and like them were surprised and irritated at finding soldiers guarding the palace gates. If Maillard had come to see the Assembly, they had come to see the king; were they to be prevented by the men whose orgies had inflamed Paris? “We only opposed them with our horses,” said the officer in command of the Body-Guard, “taking the most scrupulous care not to wound any-one,”¹ but it was enough. Angry words came from the women, horrible threats against the queen, here and there blows from the men; nor did the deputies themselves escape abuse. “In the days when they had one king,” shouted the mob, “the people had bread, but since they had had twelve hundred, they perished from misery.”²

For a moment there was a fear that their “one king” had failed them. The women admitted to the palace with the deputation from the Assembly returned jubilant. They had been graciously received by the king, and they bore with them his order for the free circulation of corn, and its immediate transport to “his good town of Paris.”³ But the order was not signed, and a wild fury seized the mob. Insults, blows, threats of the

¹ *Déposition des Gardes du Corps*, B. M. P., F. 490-2.

² Lameth, Alex. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 150.

³ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. ix. p. 347.

lanterne greeted the messengers, who were only saved by the interference of the Body-Guard. Re-admitted to the palace the women delegates obtained the royal signature, whereat the jealous mob outside allowed them to depart peacefully, in carriages lent by the royal *messageries*, carrying the king's order to the anxious municipality at Paris. Their mission was accomplished.

Why then did not the others depart also? Was it only because they were tired and hungry, or was it because there was something else to do, and, as some among them said, because they were told to stay? Whatever the reason, they remained, and Lecointre, on duty as Major of one of the divisions of the National Guard of Versailles and trusted as a patriot, went to the royal troops, told them that the mob believed themselves in danger and asked what the people had to fear. The answer was "nothing." "Never," added the Flanders' regiment, "would they fire upon the people." Armed with these assurances Lecointre now assumed a kind of command over the thronging mass on the Place d'Armes and the Avenue de Paris. He asked for a hearing, which, strange to say, seemed always readily granted. "Your brothers of Versailles," he said, "send me to ask what brings you here and what you want." "Bread, and an end of these troubles," they replied. Thereupon, accompanied by

a deputation of the Parisiennes, Lecointre went to the municipality of Versailles and asked for 600 pounds weight of bread to feed their brothers of Paris. So much bread did not exist in the town, but an order was issued to the bakers to bake all night long, and a supply of two tons of rice was cooked to serve until the bread was ready. Meantime it rained heavily, and the October evening was very dark ; the inhabitants had shut their shops, barred their doors and shutters ; only the bake-houses and a few wine-shops were open, and the Paris mob had nowhere to go. They lingered on in the Place d'Armes, wandered about in groups, crowded the Salle des États, and took refuge in churches.

As evening advanced, orders were given to the troops on the Place d'Armes to retire. As the Body-Guard obeyed, the mob pelted it with mud. Irritated, one man fired, and instantly the National Guard under Lecointre replied. “O mon Dieu, through what tumult have we to pass to our regeneration !” cried a deputy who happened to cross the Avenue de Paris at the moment.¹ And yet the wonder is that things were not worse on that long afternoon and evening. Shots were fired ; a horse was killed, and its rider barely escaped ; an officer was wounded, but of actual loss of life there was none.

¹ *Revue de la Révolution*, vol. xiv., 1889. *Correspondance de Boullé*.

It was indeed the peculiar combination of circumstances that turned a popular incident into a political event. That morning the National Assembly had opened its sitting by reading the king's reply to the Declaration of Rights, and those Articles of Constitution already submitted to him. The events of the 1st and 3rd of October, and the excitement they had caused in Paris made it more important than ever that the Articles should be signed, and the country thereby assured that the king and Assembly were at one. When, therefore, Louis wrote, "I give, as you desire, my sanction to these Articles, but on the express condition—a condition I shall never relinquish—that the executive remains entirely in the hands of the monarch,"¹ a long and stormy debate ensued. Conditions, it was said, would impair the security of the Constitution, and it was decided that a deputation should go to the king and ask for an unconditional acceptance. It was just then that the Parisiennes entered the Assembly, a living and lively argument in favour of anything that would secure order and restore prosperity.

Late that night, after long hours of hesitation, Louis told Mounier that he renounced the condition from which "he never would depart," whereupon the President hurried from the Palace to report the

¹ See *Journal des États Généraux, séance du 5 octobre 1780.*

decision of the king to the deputies waiting in the Salle des États.

To his intense surprise, he found the sitting broken up, and the hall abandoned to the women, one of whom graciously yielded him the President's chair. The few deputies who lingered told him that the Assembly had waited until nine o'clock and then separated, since the presence of the women, their interruptions, and way of taking part in the discussion, made serious business impossible. Mounier snatched a scrap of paper, wrote on it a request to the municipality to sound the drum in all the streets of Versailles and recall the deputies ;¹ there were important matters to communicate. Presently the women heard a shout of applause at some words spoken from the President's chair. Too ignorant to understand its cause, they asked if it meant the good news of bread for the poor of Paris, for they, waiting for such news, were dying of hunger and had eaten nothing all day. Mounier at once sent for all the bread, sausages, wine and brandy he could find, and fed the women—all unconscious of the political result of their insurrection—there and then in the very Salle des États.

Once again Paris had interfered, and the Declaration of Rights and the first Articles

¹ Tuetey, *Répertoire des manuscrits sur la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 102, says this order is in the *Bibliothèque de Versailles*.

of the Constitution were safe. Louis had given unconditional consent to the decrees which placed the principle of sovereignty in the nation and exalted the law above the king. Next day Paris was to impose still harder conditions on her sovereign.

CHAPTER XII.

“TO PARIS!”



MEDAL STRUCK IN HONOUR OF THE
KING'S REMOVAL TO PARIS.

ON September 25th, a Paris newspaper had suggested that the king, queen, and Assembly should be invited to pass the winter in the capital, and that on their arrival a “treaty of affection” should be signed by the sovereign and the inhabitants of his “good town of

Paris” in presence of the National Assembly, after which trade and the arts would certainly revive, the *émigrés* return, and the deserted capital live again.¹ The newspaper gave expression to what was fast becoming a fixed idea among many of the Parisians. From the middle of September, that is from the time Paris first heard rumours of additional troops

¹ *Chronique de Paris*, du 25 Sep. 1789.

at Versailles, there had been agitation in the capital, an agitation fostered by political intriguers, and there "only wanted a signal," wrote Bailly, "for insurrection to break out."¹ The signal was given when the drum was seized at the guard-house near the Halles; the news of the women's march spread from district to district, the churches sounded the tocsin, the National Guard turned out. But the women were well on their way before Paris had clearly determined on her course.

As a rule, the sittings of the Municipality began at nine o'clock in the morning. But on the morning of October 5th the commotion in the Place de Grève, and in the narrow streets adjoining, prevented it from meeting until twelve o'clock. Its first step was to despatch messages to warn Versailles; its second, to take active measures to provide food for the capital. The National Guard was directed to send detachments into the neighbouring villages, to seize at a fair price all corn not needed for their consumption, to see it cut down, thrashed, and sent to Paris; the districts were invited to send "well-disposed citizens to help in these operations," and civil officers were appointed to see that all was done "with prudence and moderation."² This decision was come to in con-

¹ Bailly, J. S., *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 391.

² Lacroix, S., *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 170.

sultation with Lafayette, and he, as head of the National Guard, and popular in Paris, went out to the Place de Grève to make it known to the people. He was met with cries of “To Versailles!”

While the Municipality had been consulting, the Place de Grève had been filling with a more orderly crowd than that which had followed the women in the morning and had accompanied them to Versailles. There were groups of women and groups of ruffians still, but the bulk of the crowd was made up of the unpaid volunteers of the National Guard standing, district by district, round their flags.¹

“To Versailles!” from each lip was a serious cry. Lafayette sent an aide-de-camp to the Hôtel de Ville for instructions while he himself harangued the people. After long delay the instructions came. The Municipality “considering the circumstances, and the desire of the people” authorised the National Guard to go to Versailles.² Accordingly between five and six in the afternoon, with three companies of grenadiers, with the battalions of the districts and two commissioners bearing a message from the Municipality to the king, Lafayette set out. He was followed by eight hundred men

¹ Lacroix, S., *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 171.

² *Actes de la Commune*, vol. ii. p. 171.

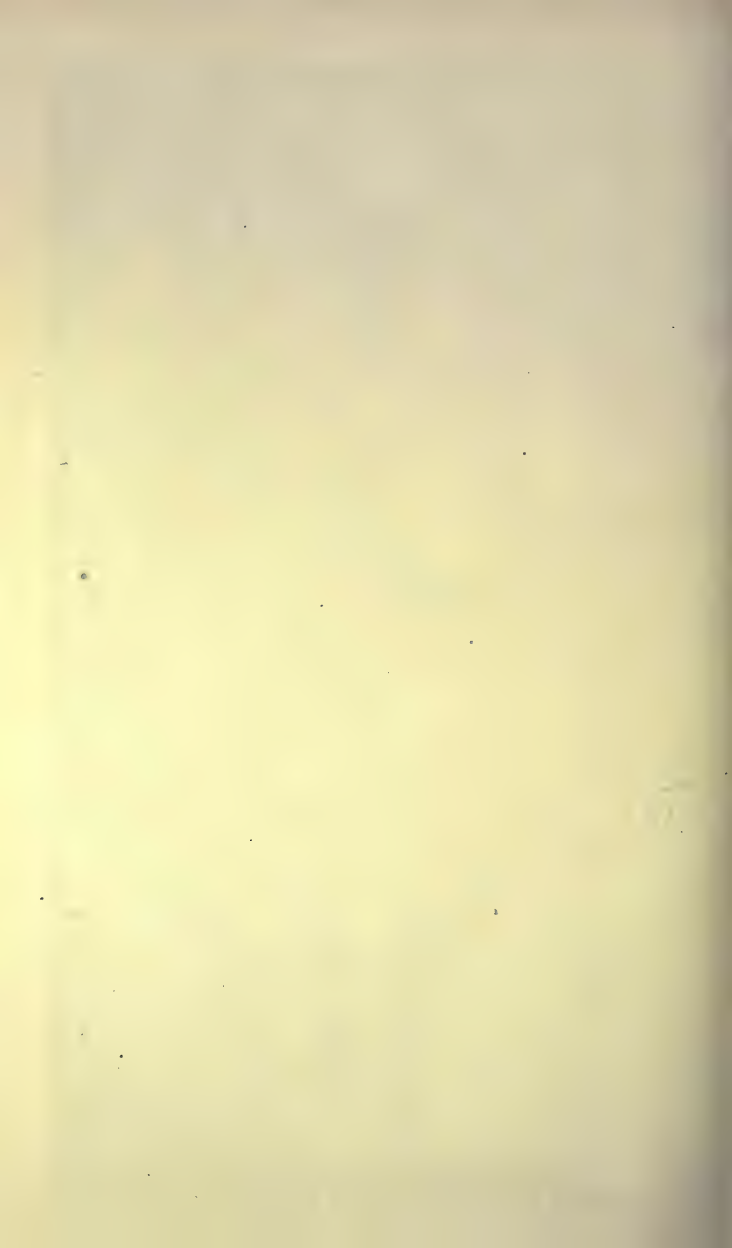
in rags. This time Paris was gone, not for bread but for the "baker," not for orders from the king, but for the king himself.

It was about half-past ten in the evening when Versailles settling to sleep after the commotion and agitation of the day, was roused by the beating of drums and the march past of some twenty thousand men. Lafayette was come.¹

In whatever spirit Lafayette had left Paris, he arrived in Versailles with a clearly defined rôle. He had come as a deliverer. He would save Louis from the Paris mob, and if in so doing he could compass the removal of the king to the capital so much the better for France. Before entering the town he made his followers swear to respect the dwelling of the king; he next halted at the Salle des États to announce his arrival; then going on to the palace, accompanied by the two representatives of the Paris Municipality, he was admitted to the presence of the king. Louis was in his *Cabinet de travail*. With him were the Comte de Provence, Necker, the Keeper of the Seals, the officers of his Guard and a number of nobles. Lafayette addressing the king said that he and the National Guard of Paris were come to assure him of their affection and of their

¹ See *Revue de la Révolution*, vol. xvi. p. 54. *Correspondance de Boullé*, ed. by A. Macé.





readiness to shed their blood for his, and added that twenty thousand armed men, sent by the express wish of the capital, waited in the Avenue de Paris. Louis turned to the representatives from the Commune of Paris and asked what the Commune desired. They answered that Paris wished four things. “First, that the care of the king’s most sacred person should be entrusted to the National Guards of Paris and Versailles; second, assurance of food for the coming winter; third, a Constitution, proper administration of justice, and the king’s sanction to the decrees of the Assembly; fourth, that the king would inhabit the fairest palace in Europe, in the greatest city in the kingdom, among the largest number of his subjects, and thereby prove to France his affection for her.”¹ Thus in plain but respectful language, the wish of Paris was made clear.

To the first three requests Louis replied that he had already given or would willingly give his consent; to the fourth he gave no definite answer, but the representatives left his presence with the vision of a king in Paris, and a France basking in prosperity. Thereafter, one by one, the court, the Assembly, Lafayette himself, retired to rest.

“At five o’clock next morning, all was quiet in Versailles and at the Château . . . at a quarter to

¹ *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 182.

six all was in confusion.”¹ It must, perhaps, always remain more or less a mystery, why the mob, which separated the night before in a comparatively peaceful mood, should have wakened in so fierce a temper. Lafayette suspected paid agitators, and by and by advised the Duc d’Orléans to ask for a foreign mission from the king until enquiry on these troublous days were over. Carlyle thinks “that menaced rascality, with fasting stomach ready to take offence” was reason enough. Le Roi, whose account is one of the clearest, attributes the attack on the Château to opportunity.

The day before, he says, all the gates of the Château were carefully closed and watched by the Body-Guard, but it was not so on the morning of the sixth, for to Lafayette and the *garde soldée* of Paris had been committed the charge of the outer posts. It was a duty to which, as Gardes Françaises, the men had been accustomed, and they fell into their old habit of leaving certain gates open for convenience in relieving guard.² When, therefore, the women began to gather in the early morning on the Place d’Armes they found the gate leading into the Cour des Ministres open. One or two ventured in, and as the sentinels of the National Guard offered no opposition, others followed. Seeing the gate of the Cour des Princes open, they ventured

¹ Le Roi, *Histoire de Versailles*, vol. ii. p. 86. ² *Id.*, vol. ii. p. 86.

farther, and found themselves on the terrace below the apartments of the queen. The noise they made awakened Marie-Antoinette, but her *femme de chambre* looking out said it was only the women who, having nowhere to go, were walking about; and the queen remained quietly in bed.¹

Presently, however, she was rudely aroused. The horde of men who had hurried out of Paris after the women, and after Lafayette, also gathered on the Place d'Armes. They were armed with pikes, sabres, and pistols, carried patriotic emblems, and muttered threats and murmurs; conspicuous among them was a man with a great beard, known afterwards as Jourdan, *coupe-tête*. They, too, reached the Cour des Princes, and from it the Cour Royale. “They were rather afraid of what they did,” we are told, “but, meeting little opposition, grew bold,”² and made a rush for the palace.

One of the Body-Guard, Deshuttés, trying to keep back the mob at the rail which separated the Cour Royale from the Cour de Marbre, was seized, dragged to the Place d'Armes, and killed. Another, M. de Varicourt, struck down at the head of the great marble staircase, met the same fate. Jourdan severed the heads from the bodies of the murdered gentlemen and mounted them on pikes, and the

¹ Le Roi, *Histoire de Versailles*, vol. ii. p. 86.

² Sallier, *Annales françaises*, vol. i. p. 359.

ruffians of lowest Paris dragged the headless trunks about. These were the only murders,¹ but the ferocious element which lurks in the untutored Gallic nature was aroused, and the cry was for the queen. "Kill, kill, no quarter, let us find the queen." With little difficulty they found the staircase leading to her apartments, where they encountered a detachment of the Body-Guard. These, true to the king's instructions not to shed blood, attempted persuasion before force. "My friends," cried one of them, M. de Miomandre, "you love your king, and yet you would disquiet him in his very palace."² But the people were in no mood for speeches; Miomandre was all but overwhelmed, and with his comrades was forced to take refuge in the Salle du Sacre, but he managed to open a door leading to the queen's ante-chamber and to call to one of her women, "Madame, save the queen." The act all but cost him his life, but it saved the queen.

Instantly the ladies locked the door of the second ante-chamber, and flying to the queen roused her, threw over her a skirt and mantle, and dragged her to a little private door leading to the king's apartments. It was locked, and the mob was forcing, one by one, the doors leading through the royal

¹ One of the people was killed, but this was during the scuffle with the Guards. *Le Roi*, vol. i. p. 93.

² *Le Roi, Histoire de Versailles*, vol. ii. p. 88.

apartments to the bedroom of the queen. For five minutes, Marie-Antoinette and her attendants waited. They knocked, they called, and at length just in time,—for the people were fast gaining ground,—the king's valet heard and opened. In a few minutes the king and queen, the children, the Comte and Comtesse de Provence, Madame Elisabeth, the king's sister, and Mesdames his aunts, were assembled in the king's *chambre à coucher*, separated from the mob by his apartments, and by the *Œil-de-Bœuf*.

In the *Œil-de-Bœuf* the Body-Guard, driven by the mob from the Salle du Sacre, had taken up their stand, and there, ready to defend one after another the *chambre de parade*, the *cabinet du conseil*, and the *cabinet du roi*, until driven back on the king's bedchamber, they awaited death with the utmost courage.¹ It seemed very near, for the assailants had reached the door of the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and were striking it with heavy blows.

Suddenly there was a silence. A detachment of the National Guard had arrived, and knocking at the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, called out that they were come as friends to save the king and to save the Body-Guard. "We are the 'centre' grenadiers, old Gardes Françaises. You saved us at Fontenoy," they cried, and with these words all danger ceased. National Guard and Body-Guard together cleared the palace, and

¹ Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 15.

Lafayette could boast that he had saved the king.

Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette showed themselves at their best in moments of personal danger. Neither king nor queen had betrayed fear or lost self-control for a moment. "Afraid," Louis had said the day before when told of the coming of the Parisiennes, "I do not know what fear is,"¹ and now immediately that the royal family were safely assembled, he had passed into the *cabinet du conseil* to confer with his ministers, and there Lafayette found him.

Very early that same morning Louis had listened to the respectful wish of Paris that he would remove to the capital. He had not answered then, but he must answer now. "It was," as Barnave said in the Salle des États, "a grave decision," only to be come to after full discussion, but the hour for calm discussion had passed. Hardly had Lafayette joined the king when cries were heard from the crowd in the court below, "the king, the king, we wish to see the king." Louis, accompanied by Lafayette, at once showed himself on the balcony overlooking the Cour de Marbre. He was greeted with shouts of "*Vive le roi, vive la nation!*" then presently rose other cries, "The queen, let her show herself on the balcony."

¹ See Mme. de Tourzel, vol. i. p. 1 *seq.* for doings of the royal family.

For a moment Marie-Antoinette hesitated ; “Madame,” said Lafayette, “the people will not be pacified unless you go.” “Then,” replied the queen, “I hesitate no longer,” and taking her children by the hand she advanced towards the window of the *chambre de parade*. The people saw the children and thought it a ruse by which the queen meant to save herself. “No children,” they cried ; Marie-Antoinette’s proud spirit rose ; thrusting back the children she stepped out upon the balcony and instinctively crossing her arms over her breast as she looked on the menacing crowd below, stood erect and motionless, face to face with the men and women who had sought her life. Now was their opportunity, but no shot was fired ; instead, there was a hush, a movement in the crowd, a shout of “*Vive la reine !*” Her fearlessness and her queenliness had prevailed. Marie-Antoinette lingered for a moment ; Lafayette joined her and bending on one knee kissed her hand, and the shouts broke forth anew. Then the queen turned and went in, and for the first time tears rose to her eyes. “They will force us to go to Paris,” she said, and taking the little Dauphin in her arms, she covered him with kisses and with tears.¹

All summer Paris had abused Marie-Antoinette, issuing scurrilous pamphlets against her and placing

¹ Hézecques, d’, *Souvenirs d’un page de Louis XVI.*, p. 314.

her name on the list of traitors at the Palais-Royal. It had called her *monstre échappé de Germaine* and the *désastre de notre climat*.¹ But more significant and more hateful to the queen was the fact that Paris had begun to dominate the king. Paris had obliged him to withdraw troops, to recall ministers, to sanction a National Guard, and an independent municipality; had declared against a veto, and only the day before had forced him to sign the Articles of Constitution without conditions. What wonder that at the thought of removing to the capital Marie-Antoinette felt the cords of fate tighten around her and her husband? "I know," she said to Lafayette, "the fate that awaits me there."²

Meantime Louis and his ministers had returned to the *cabinet du conseil* and had resumed the discussion on the king's removal to Paris. Necker urged it and Lafayette stood as symbol of the wish of the capital. The National Assembly decreed itself inseparable from the person of the king; if Louis went to Paris it would follow. Then arose the cry Marie-Antoinette feared to hear; "To Paris! the king to Paris!"

Presently Louis reappeared on the balcony, and "in a loud voice" pronounced "those touching words which no good Frenchman should forget,

¹ B. M. P. Chansons, F.R. 456, *Ode à la reine*.

² Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 83.

'My friends, I go to Paris with my wife and children; to the love of my good and faithful subjects I entrust my most precious possessions.'

A universal cry of joy and the shedding of tears was the reply of the great multitude that stood with eyes fixed on the head of the nation."¹ Louis, seizing the auspicious moment, added "My Body-Guard has been slandered, its fidelity to the nation and to myself has earned for it the respect of my people," at which Lafayette and the Paris representatives appeared on the balcony with officers of the Body-Guard, and embraced them in the sight of the people.

The troublous, angry morning had passed, and a stranger coming to the Place d'Armes would have found a grateful people—armed with pikes and of threatening aspect, it is true—shouting "*Vive le roi!*" National Guards firing muskets, gunners sending off cannonades in token of the joy that was felt on this "memorable day of concord."²

Already the most ruffianly among the crowd had set off for Paris, bearing the heads of the two Body-Guards before them,³ the others waited for the king

¹ *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 184. Message sent to the Hôtel de Ville.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. ix. p. 350. Speech of Mirabeau.

³ Lafayette, in his second account of Oct. 5, says that the bandits who carried the heads of the Guards had reached the Palais-Royal and were dispersed before the king left Versailles. *Mémoires, correspondances et manuscrits*, vol. ii. p. 353.

and prepared for the return to Paris as for a fête. The women decked themselves with greenery and ornamented the cannon they had dragged to Versailles with branches of trees and shrubs. Some sixty waggons of grain had been collected for the capital, bakers had been busy all night, every National Guard carried a loaf on his bayonet, every *poissarde* one in her hand. The preparations of the royal family were less cheerful. The whole palace was in melancholy confusion and there was hardly time to do more than carry away important papers.¹

A little after half-past one the procession started. The great chariot, glittering with glass and gilding, into which the king and queen, their children and governess, Monsieur and Madame, and Madame Elisabeth mounted, was the one symbol of magnificence left to the "Father of his People." The National Guard of Paris preceded his carriage, women of the Halles and of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine walked by its side, a convoy of grain formed its rearguard. Last of all in this strange unruly medley of a procession came court carriages conveying a hundred deputies of the National Assembly.²

The march from Versailles to Paris was very

¹ Hézecques, d', *Souvenirs d'un page de Louis XVI.*, p. 313.

² Tourzel, Mme. de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 20 seq.

long and wearisome, but it was made wearisome by the rejoicing of the villages through which it passed, as well as by its unwieldy, lengthy and motley elements. Threats and insults were uttered from time to time, for the rabble was not all in front, but when the king and queen “spoke kindly to the people who walked by their side, they, surprised and gratified, replied, ‘We did not know you were like this, we have been much deceived.’”¹ Next day Marie-Antoinette herself, writing to the Comte de Mercy said, “could we only forget where we are and how we came, we ought to be pleased by the attitude of the people.”²

It was between six and seven in the evening when the procession from Versailles reached the Barrière de la Conférence, where the Mayor of Paris and twenty-four of the Representatives of the Commune waited a second time to welcome a conquered king. There the king and queen heard Bailly repeat “the wish of the capital.” “Every moment that your Majesty spares us,” he said, “is precious to us, but it is your habitual presence, all the moments of your life that your people ask.”³

With the return of the Royal family to its ancient home a change came over the spirit and

¹ Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 20.

² Rocheterie, *Lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 146.

³ *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 189.

character of the court life. "We follow the system considered suitable to the new royalty" said Lafayette, and Louis found himself under the surveillance of the National Guard. Etiquette and ceremonial continued, but they were only a shadow of the past. The *lever* and *coucher* took place as before, the gaming-tables were laid out in the queen's apartments each Sunday and Thursday, and Marie-Antoinette held court, but "the courtiers of misfortune," says a contemporary, "were infinitely few."¹

The king could of course drive, ride, and walk out at his pleasure, accompanied now only by two officers and his suite, but his passion was for the hunt, and from this he was debarred. His Grande and Petite Écurie, his kennels and all the splendid equipage of the chase were at Versailles, and since the abolition of privilege on August the 4th, the forests near Paris,—those of Saint-Germain and Vincennes,—had been so abused by the people that a decree had to be passed to preserve their very existence. Nor were there visits to Fontainebleau in November and to Compiègne in July, for the National Assembly and the king were voted inseparable for the present session, and the present session showed no sign of coming to an end. To this changed condition of

¹ *Revue de la Révolution*, 1889, vol. xvi. p. 213. *Vie privée de Louis XVI. aux Tuileries*.

things Louis resigned himself without much apparent effort.¹

Marie-Antoinette met reverses in a more royal spirit. She set herself a definite task ; her aim was to recover the old prestige of the Crown, and to this end she determined if possible to win back the affection and confidence of the people. The people had credited her with undue influence in the Councils of the king, and attributed to her, intrigue with Austria at the expense of France, and had laid at her door every plot against the Revolution. She resolved therefore to keep steadily in the background. “My rôle,” she said in a letter written on October 28th to the Baron de Flachslanden, a devoted adherent and an *émigré*, “is to shut myself up completely, and try by absolute inaction to make the people forget everything about me except the courage which they themselves witnessed, and which must make an impression.”² It was a rôle which, unfortunately, she found it impossible to support for long.

Two days after Louis left Versailles, there came up for discussion in the National Assembly the form in which the king should promulgate the laws under the new Constitution. By the Articles signed

¹ See Mme. de Tourzel, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 26 *seq.* for account of royal family at the Tuileries.

² Rocheterie et Beaucourt, *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 151.

by the king, late on the evening of the 5th, the legislative power remained exclusively with the National Assembly, and the executive alone was given to the king. In these circumstances, the old form of proclamation, ending as it did with the phrase "for such is our pleasure," was unsuitable, and the old title "Louis by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre" was objected to, as autocratic and apt to make kings imagine themselves masters of the territory of France. Saint-Just proposed a still older title, that used by the kings of France long before the old regime fettered the freedom of the people. "Louis by the grace of God and by the law of the kingdom, king of the French." To this, Pétion, afterwards famous as Mayor of Paris, objected that kings reigned neither by the grace of God nor by the law of the kingdom, but by the consent of the people. Whereupon Mirabeau, with a touch of satire, replied that "if kings reigned by the grace of God, so also were the people sovereign by that same grace," and proposed the title which was adopted. "Louis by the grace of God and the Constitutional Law of the State, King of the French."¹

Years ago Louis XIV. had left Paris because he wished to be master of France; now, Louis

¹ *Archives parlementaires* vol. ix. p. 383.

XVI. returned because France had proved master of the king. “Gentlemen,” said Mirabeau when the Parlement of Metz was taken to task because it had declared that the king was no longer free, “I am persuaded that the king *is* free, he himself declares it in his proclamation, but if he were not, what else could he say?”¹

Notwithstanding the coming of the king, Paris continued restless and disturbed; insurrectionary pamphlets were rife and two soldiers of the National Guard stood at the door of every baker’s shop; the National Assembly, which on October 19th followed the king to Paris, discussed the institution of martial law, and the Hôtel de Ville issued appeals to the orderly instinct of the people. “Is not your king in your midst, does not the Assembly welcome all your demands? What more is there to wish for except the law and order which alone will restore prosperity?”²

Law and order were slow to come, and on October 23rd a riot occurred by which a certain François, a baker justly respected for his care to secure a sufficient supply of flour, lost his life. His bake-house was close by the Archbishop’s palace, and for the convenience of the deputies,

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, No. 1. (Camille Desmoulins).

² *Actes de la Commune de Paris*, vol. ii. p. 307. *Adresse aux habitants de Paris*.

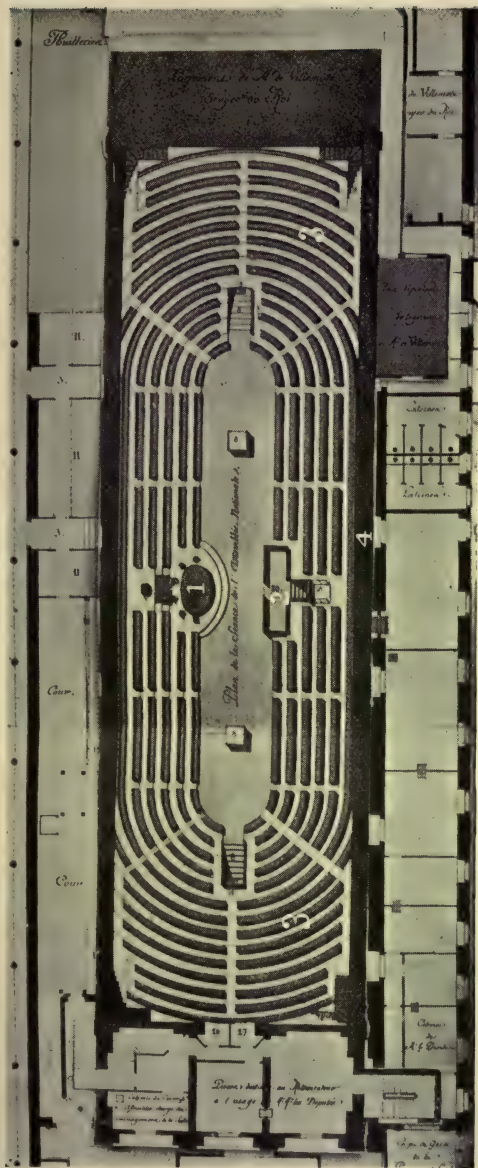
he baked a number of small rolls. Because the people, waiting for their own loaves, found a quantity of the *petits pains* reserved for the deputies, François was accused of concealing bread and was hanged by the mob on the Place de Grève.

The deed determined the National Assembly to come to a decision regarding martial law, and on October 21st it empowered the municipalities to call out the National Guard and regular troops, and after due warning order them, if need be, to fire upon the people.¹ Thus the change of residence of king and National Assembly became, by an irony of fate, the indirect occasion of a decree from whose abuse,² two years later, some historians date the rise of the party which was to change the government from a Monarchy to a Republic.

¹ *Décret du 21 octobre, 1789.*

² July, 1791. See chap. xx.

TERRACE OF THE GARDENS OF THE TUILERIES CALLED TERRACE OF THE FEUILLANTS.



PLAN OF THE SALLE DU MANÈGE.

Original in the Archives nationales.

- (1) President's desk, Speaker's tribune, and Secretaries' table.
- (2) Visitors' tribunes



CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST YEAR OF LIBERTY.



[MOTTO OF THE JACOBIN CLUB.]

FOR more than a year after the “days of October” no great excitement¹ moved the capital. The Revolution was deemed an accomplished fact ; its broad lines for good or for evil were laid down, and there only remained to embody theory and principle in detailed laws. It is at this point that we come face to face with that passion for equality which, quite as much as the passion for liberty, characterised the French Revolution. It was a passion which was at every point resisted by prejudice and its demands had to be carefully safeguarded ; nor were they always fulfilled. Henceforth we find the legislation of the National Assembly occupied in reducing differences—in translating the idea

¹ Excepting that of the *Fête de la Fédération*, which was not revolutionary in its character.

of equality into uniformity—in a levelling process which, beginning with a “new royalty,” touched one by one every institution in France, but found, as we shall see, certain limits when it came to determine the political position of the *bourgeoisie*.

In this levelling process the National Assembly began by reforming itself. When, on the 27th of June, the clergy and nobles joined the Third Estate the three Orders were, for political purposes, abolished; but the privileged Orders retained their special places in the Salle des États, and kept their ancient precedence on occasions of ceremonial. Before removing to Paris the National Assembly decided that in future all distinction between the two first Orders and the third should be abolished, and that the dress which had hitherto distinguished a deputy from an ordinary citizen should also be discarded.¹ Henceforth the old distinction of Orders gave way to that of parties.

It was the question of the veto, as Mr. Morse Stephens has said, which first divided the National Assembly into parties,² but it was in the new Salle des Séances at Paris that parties became clearly defined. This hall lay to the north of the Tuileries gardens, exactly where the Rue de Rivoli now runs, and was the Salle du Manège or riding-school

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. ix. p. 454, 15 Oct., 1789.

² Stephens, H. M., *History of the French Revolution*. vol. i. p. 203.

attached to the Tuileries. From its windows the deputies could see the palace. The National Assembly was indeed "inseparable from the sacred person of the king," but in the great hall where its deputies met, in all its arrangements for committee-rooms, secretaries' rooms, waiting-rooms, etc.,¹ no provision was made for royalty, no concession granted to rank. The platform on which stood the president's desk was the central object; beside it was the *tribune* from which deputies spoke; before it were the secretaries' desks, and opposite it the bar, at which deputations presented their petitions and addresses. On the president's right hand sat those of the deputies who wished to see the old form of government modified or reformed; on his left, those who wished for an entire change of government; while opposite to him sat a body of men committed to no policy, who formed an unknown quantity, but whose votes generally decided the fate of a measure. Thus arose the party names—Right, Left, Centre—preserved in France to this day.

So long as the National Assembly remained at Versailles it was led by the men who belonged to the party known later as the Right, by Mounier, Malouet, Lally-Tollendal, and the like. But the

¹ See for full description, Brette, A., *Histoire des édifices où ont siégé les assemblées de la révolution*. Baudouin, printer to the National Assembly, had a little office in the Salle du Manège, where orders were received.

debate on the veto discouraged the moderate men, and Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, Clermont-Tonnerre, and the Bishop of Langres, believing that the revolutionary movement was adopting false and foolish lines, resigned their seats ; thus the political field was left more open to the bolder spirits of the day. Thereafter, until this first or Constituent Assembly¹ dissolved, discussions were led by the Left ; by the young nobles—Barnave, the Lameths, and Dupont de Nemours ; by ecclesiastics such as Talleyrand and the Abbé Grégoire ; by the lawyers Camus and Thouret, and by the Protestant pastor Rabaud Saint-Etienne. Henceforth the temper as well as the regulations of the National Assembly grew more and more democratic.

On this democratic tendency the removal of the National Assembly to Paris had, as the more moderate deputies expected, a marked influence. Paris, with her Palais-Royal, her powerful Municipality, her sixty districts, was the heart of the revolution, and the Assembly felt itself under a debt to the capital. "Here we deliberate before our masters,"² exclaimed one of the deputies on the first sitting of the Assembly in the Salle du Manège. And the "masters" took care to be

¹ The first National Assembly is called the Constituent, in opposition to the second or Legislative, because to it was committed the task of framing a Constitution, while the second had only to make laws.

² Malouet, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 11.

present. The *tribunes* or galleries reserved for the public were generally full, and the men and women who sat there became for political purposes almost an integral part of the Assembly. The method by which votes were recorded lent the tribunes a great part of their power. Deputies in favour of a motion stood, those against it sat still; but if there were doubt as to a majority, the minority could always demand the *appel nominal*; that is, could require that each deputy be asked by name to vote "yes" or "no." Now many a man who had courage to stand up with his fellows in favour of an unpopular motion had not courage to say "yes" alone, in face of the shouts and hootings of the galleries, and the *appel nominal* was often resorted to in order to turn a minority into a majority.¹

Yet the most revolutionary influence in the capital from this time forward was not a Parisian institution, but the famous Jacobin Club which had its origin in the National Assembly itself. It will be remembered that when the Breton deputies first went to Versailles, they at once hired a room in which they could meet and consult together on their action in the States-General. When the Assembly removed to Paris, the Breton Club moved also. "Terrified at the idea of being isolated, and, so to speak, lost in the great city, the deputies from

¹ Du Quesnoy, *Journal sur l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 125.

distant provinces tried to secure lodgings as near as possible to the Salle du Manège, and sought at the same time for a hall in which they could meet and discuss public matters.”¹ A little to the north of the Salle du Manège was the convent of the Jacobins, bounded on one side by the Rue Saint-Honoré, and on the other by the Rue Sainte-Hyacinthe. Here for two hundred francs, or about £8 a year, they hired the refectory of the convent, and for another £8 its tables and chairs.²

With its removal to Paris the Breton Club changed its name, modified its character, and assumed an altogether new importance. It decided to constitute itself a *Société des Amis de la Constitution*, to strengthen its foundations and enlarge its boundaries, and for this, residence in Paris gave it ample opportunity. The new Society no longer restricted its membership to deputies, but extended it to writers who had published useful works—to mathematicians, publicists, economists—among whom Condorcet was one of the first to be received; a little later this restriction was also removed, and any man might offer himself as a member who could find six deputies to propose his name. This

¹ Lameth, A. de. *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 422, note 4. See also Aulard, A., *La Société des Jacobins*. A little later the club removed into the library, and finally, when church property became national property, into the chapel of the convent.

² *Id.*

admission of non-deputies had very important results, for it made possible the setting up of branch societies all over France. These began as early as December 1789, and by August 1790 numbered one hundred and fifty-two, and presently many more, while in December 1790 the members on the roll of the parent society had risen to over eleven hundred.¹ The "Friends of the Constitution" or the Jacobins, as they were almost invariably called, numbered in Paris about as many as did the deputies, and had in addition their affiliated societies.

Thus constituted, the Jacobin Club continued its work of discussing one by one the different "projects" for new laws, and of deciding the course to be taken by the deputy members of the club regarding these. Further, it prepared lists for the nomination of the president, secretaries, and committees of the Assembly. Now the club had as its motto "to live free or to die," and it required every member to profess a love of equality and a belief in the rights of man so profound as to make him instinctively defend the feeble, while a bye-law enacted that any member who showed himself opposed to the spirit of the club should be reprimanded by the President or expelled according to circumstances.² It therefore attracted only those

¹ Aulard, A., *La Société des Jacobins*, pp. xix. lxxxi.

² *Id.*, p. xxviii. Extract from Rules.

deputies who represented, and those citizens who sympathised, with the party of the Left, and so powerful was its influence that the measures it advocated and the candidates it proposed were almost always carried. "From this time" (the winter of 1789-90), says Alexandre de Lameth, "the presidents and secretaries of the National Assembly were almost always chosen from the Left, to the great advantage of the popular party."¹

The Abbé Grégoire gives us a glimpse into the methods of the Jacobin Club and of the way in which it co-operated with the Left. "The fourth of August," he says, "had removed many abuses, but many were still left. The opinion of many of the deputies was less advanced than ours, and to attain our ends we had to exercise caution ; our tactics were simple. A suitable opportunity was taken to propose a motion in the Assembly. The measure was sure to be applauded by a few and to be hooted by the majority. That did not matter ; the proposer always asked and obtained leave to remit the motion to a committee where its opponents hoped to bury it. Then the Jacobins set to work. On a circular issued by them, or on a notice published in their journal, the question was discussed in the four or five hundred affiliated societies, and three weeks later addresses poured in on the Assembly, demanding a

¹ Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 423.

law on some motion which the Assembly had meantime rejected. The question was revived, discussion followed, public opinion had ripened and the rejected motion became law by a great majority.”¹

No one of the clubs which supported the Right had anything like the influence of that of the Jacobins. The *Club de Valois* founded in February, the *Club de 1789* in April 1789; the *Club monarchique* and the *Club des Impartiaux*, with its motto “*Justice, vérité, constance*,” founded by Malouet in December of that same year as a rival to the Jacobins had each their day, but the atmosphere of Paris was uncongenial, and hunted from one meeting-place to another by patriots who objected to their vicinity, they finally succumbed before the revolutionary spirit of the capital.² It was the same with the newspapers. In the six months which followed the taking of the Bastille, six very notable journals sprang into existence. Of these, only one, the *Actes des Apôtres* was royalist; four, Marat’s *Ami du peuple*, Brissot’s *Le patriote français*, Prudhomme’s *Révolutions de Paris* and Camille Desmoulins’ *Révolutions de Paris et de Brabant* were strongly revolutionary, while the sixth, the *Chronique de Paris*, though less pronounced was also on the popular side.

Thus, influenced on the one hand by the Jacobins

¹ *Mémoires de Grégoire*, vol. i. p. 387.

² Challamel, A., *Les clubs anti-révolutionnaires*.

and the journals, and on the other by the belief, as yet untested by experience, that equality and liberty are inseparable terms, the National Assembly set about to frame the special laws which were to make up the Constitution.

It will be remembered that the Assembly had striven all autumn to hasten the making of the Constitution in order to quell the disorders which troubled France. Unfortunately France did not settle down quietly as soon as the principles by which she was to be governed were decreed ; there were troubles in Brittany, troubles in the small towns near Paris, troubles more or less all over the country. Many of these disturbances were brought about by the unsettled state of municipal government, for the old *bureaux de ville* with their antiquated customs and picturesque ceremonies were being set aside, and *comités provisoires*, elected by the citizens in imitation of Paris, set up instead. These were not yet organised or established by law, and quarrels arose as to their authority.

The National Assembly therefore set itself first of all to draw up a constitution for the municipalities, and in doing so found that it was impossible to separate municipalities from the districts of which they were a part. It found itself face to face with a very complicated set of divisions, for France was divided into *bailliages*

for the purposes of justice, into dioceses for the jurisdiction of the church, into *généralités*¹ for civil administration by intendants, and into *gouvernements*² for the army. Over and above all these conflicting divisions were the provinces, instinct with ancient history, each with its own peculiarities and traditions, its frontiers, and separate custom houses ; distinct one from another in laws and manners—some gained by conquest, some brought as a marriage dower, others united by treaty, all more or less a province first, and France second.

Such a state of things was entirely at variance with the systematising spirit then in possession of France, and with that idea of patriotism, founded on a theory of liberty and equality, before which associations of birth, influences of education, differences of religion were expected to bow. Accordingly the National Assembly set itself to frame a scheme which would “substitute for the old unequal partitions of the territory of France, a simple and uniform division which would serve as a basis for

¹ Arbitrary divisions of France instituted for purposes of finance. As the royal power encroached on the old jurisdictions, the *généralités* under *intendants*, crown officers invested with extensive powers absorbed the functions of the older *bailliages*, which ceased to be important except as judicial and electoral divisions. See p. 41.

² Purely military divisions, almost coterminous with the provinces, presided over by lieutenants-general or governors. To these was entrusted the defence of, and the distribution of troops within the *gouvernements*.

the organisation of national representation, of justice of municipal administration and of the church,"¹ and "would bind the different parts of the State to the whole by the application of one supreme law." Hitherto that which had bound the different parts of the State to the whole had been the idea of kingship; the king had personified the State and made its loosely bound provinces feel one, but under a regime in which liberty meant equality, that idea could have little part.

At the root of the vast equalising scheme proposed by the Assembly lay equal territorial division. The scheme divided France into departments of equal extent, each department into districts, and each district into cantons of four square leagues, but it did not confer on every man the right to vote, nor on every voter the right to become deputy. Under the king's *règlements*, as may be remembered³ every man born or naturalised Frenchman, twenty-five years of age, a householder and on the roll of taxpayers was entitled to vote for the electors who chose the deputies, and was eligible as an elector or a deputy. But under the regulations of the National Assembly, every voter must also show that he had contributed to the

¹ *Coll. des Décrets du 22 déc.*, vol. i. p. 72.

² *Archiv. parl.*, vol. ix. p. 655, *Discours de Thouret*.

³ See chapter iii. p. 41.

revenue, in direct taxes, a sum equal in value to three days' wage;¹ everyone eligible as an elector, taxes equal to the value of ten days' wage, and every deputy, taxes equal to a *marc d'argent*, i.e. fifty-four francs. Each deputy must also hold landed property.²

By these regulations the National Assembly created a political hierarchy, with four distinct classes; the non-voter, the "active citizen," the elector, and the deputy, and thus denied its own declaration that all men were entitled to equal rights. Just as, after decreeing that sovereignty lay with the people, the National Assembly proceeded to pronounce the French Government a monarchy, so now, having declared that all men were equal, it proceeded to limit their rights. The deep-rooted instincts of a people and a class are stronger than any theory, and just as France could not imagine herself a Republic, so the *bourgeoisie* could not conceive of the people as legislators. The Third Estate had not waged its successful war against privilege in order to be merged in the *manants*. "Those best able to exercise government," said a

¹ The maximum value of a day's labour was fixed at 20 sous, thus the three days' tax could not amount to more than about 2s. 6d.

² *Décret du 22 déc. 1789*, Sec. 1. Arts. iii, xiv, xxxii. Nothing had as yet been decided as to what taxes should in future be levied on the French people. The direct taxes were therefore the old ones of *capitation*—a poll tax, cf. *taille*—a tax on land.

pamphlet of the day "are those whose position is most useful to their fellows."¹

But although in this one respect the Assembly set aside the principle of equality, the discussion on the qualification of voters only served to show how strong a hold that principle was taking in the minds of men. Hitherto certain professions had been considered beyond the social pale, certain creeds had debarred men from civil rights. The executioner who carried out the sentence of the law and the actor who played on the stage of the State supported theatre were alike excluded from the rights enjoyed by the private citizens.² Protestants, it is true, had been granted civil rights by Louis XVI., but in many parts of France the Catholics chose to ignore the fact and to insist that, as the National Assembly had not expressly declared them "active citizens," the edicts issued against them by Louis XIV. were still in force. The Jews except those known as the Portuguese, Spanish and Avignon Jews, with whom special treaties existed, had no civil or political rights, and far away in the West Indies there were coloured and negro subjects of France who were totally ignored.

¹ B. M. P., *Elections*, F.R. 99, *Apologie du décret du marc d'argent*.

² *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 754, *Discours de Clermont-Tonnerre*. Domestic servants as non-domiciled were of course excluded, also debtors and the sons of debtors who failed to pay a just amount of their father's debts. *Décret du 22 décembre, 1789*.

All these classes of men found advocates in the discussion on the qualification of electors. The claims of the Protestants, of the Portuguese, Spanish, and Avignon Jews, of the comedians and of the executioner were yielded, and although those of the Jews in general, as well as of the mulatto and the negro were disallowed, the fact that such claims were discussed and upheld, marks the immense gulf between the spirit which in 1614 denied to the Third Estate the same blood as that of the privileged classes, and the spirit which in 1789 listened patiently while men urged that "colour no more than prejudice could exclude a man from civil rights."¹

The decrees which in December 1789 divided France into departments and which instituted departmental, district, and municipal administration, swept from the land its ancient institutions and provided a system whereby anomalies could be removed and all things reduced to one uniform scheme. *Généralités* and Intendants were the first to go. "Intendants and their delegates cease all functions as soon as the departments are in activity" ran the law, and the announcement was greeted with transports of joy.² In their place were the councils-general and directories of the departments; the first consisting of thirty-six councillors chosen by the

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 330, *Lettre des citoyens de couleur des colonies françaises*.

² Du Quesnoy, *Journal de l'assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 152.

people, who met once a month ; the second acting as the executive numbering only eight, and chosen by the councillors from themselves. To these bodies, totally untried in the exercise of control, was handed over the care of the roads, canals, forests and national property within the department, the charge of providing for the poor, for public education and the duty of ensuring good order.¹ The change was enormous to a people "accustomed not to govern but to obey." Instead of crown-appointed officials responsible to the king, were collective, deliberative assemblies, popularly elected, and bound to carry out the decrees of the National Assembly. Is there much wonder, when one remembers that from department to village commune the system was the same, that Mirabeau should by-and-by point out that the "supreme executive power reserved solely to the king"² was not after all very great?

*Bailliages*³ and parlements followed in the wake of the *généralités*. The delight expressed at the disappearance of the intendants was only equalled, say a contemporary, by that manifested at the abolition

¹ B. M. P., *Départements*, R. 260. *Instruction de l'assemblée nationale sur les fonctions des assemblées administratives*. The districts had a council of twelve and a directory of four members and were chiefly concerned in matters relating to taxation.

² See *La Constitution française*, Titre iii. Chap. iv. Art. i.

³ The canton replaced the *bailliage* for electoral, and its *tribunal de paix* for judicial purposes.

of the parlements. These were not yet formally suppressed, but to each of the new territorial divisions courts of justice were appointed. The canton had its *tribunal de paix*; the district its civil and the department its criminal court. Courts of appeal were also instituted. For the parlements, already shorn of their political prerogatives by the existence of a National Assembly, there was no further need, and the law which abolished them in September 1790 was hardly more than a matter of form. Nor was the church, as we shall presently see, left undisturbed.

One uniform scheme of election served for the deputies to the States-General; for the members of the administrative bodies; for the judges and the clergy of France. The "active citizen" who in primary assemblies chose the electors, chose also the members of the municipalities, the *juge de paix* and the parish *curé*. The elector in his turn chose the deputies to the National Assembly, the administrators of district and department, the judges of the civil and criminal courts and the bishops of the church. All that was left to the king was to confirm the choice of his people.¹ "It is your affair citizens, take care—do not forget that your municipality, your district, your department are the base and columns of your Constitution!"²

¹ *Décrets du 14 déc. 1789; du 16 août 1790; du 12 juillet 1790; du 22 déc. 1789; du 16 août 1790 et du 12 juillet 1790, respectively.*

² B. M. P., *Départements*, R. 260. "*C'est votre affaire, citoyens!*"

Thus this first year of liberty under Louis, King of the French, slowly but surely laid the foundations for the first year of equality under a Republic. Twice already the action of Paris had hastened this result. "The deputies," said Lameth, "went to Versailles intending only to reform abuses," but the Crown summoned troops, Paris intervened, and France found herself in a revolution. Again, as the crisis of July subsided, the court party plucked up courage, intrigues revived, Paris rose and brought king and deputies into her midst, there to hold them until king, National Assembly, the very Constitution itself, had succumbed before her.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF THE CLERGY.



BARNAVE.

“WHEN I found myself among you for the first time,” writes an imaginary critic of the doings of the time, “and heard such fine speaking, I should have thought myself in Paradise, had I not seen so many lawyers and heard talk of a Constitution. ‘For that

matter,’ said my friend, ‘some fifteen or sixteen maxims which a child of seven can understand are all that is needed to govern France and to make a Constitution.’ ‘Ah, then, I shall take my place in the coach for the beginning of the month.’ ‘Wait a moment, *père* Gérard, when we have made the Constitution, we must then begin to regulate the finances’”—and *père* Gérard wrote home that he

would not return quite so soon as he had expected.¹

For this question of finance was becoming very serious, and when in September 1789 Necker's first loan failed,² a direct appeal was made to patriotic sentiment. A *caisse patriotique* was opened to which gifts were invited, and a weekly statement was published of the contributions. To this appeal there was a generous response. Great ladies brought their jewels, merchants offered a percentage of their profits, the king sent royal plate to be melted at the Mint; the queen and ministers followed his example, and the poor did what they could. Village communities sold common land, the little town of Issoudun in Berry,—always a poor province—collected the silver buckles worn by their citizens and sold them for 115 marcs;³ even the mulattoes and negroes in the colonies sent gifts.

But gifts were not enough, and on the 24th of September Necker went to the Assembly and boldly asked it to pass a decree demanding from every

¹ Aulard, A., *La Société des Jacobins*, vol. i. p. 63, *Motion du père Gérard*. This squib is put into the mouth of Michel Gérard, deputy from Rennes, who appeared at the Assembly in peasant dress. He was the butt of his party, but from him the Jacobins adopted their peculiar waistcoat and plain locks.

² See p. 168.

³ *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 130. It was the example of Issoudun which on Nov. 20th induced the deputies to send their buckles to the *caisse patriotique*.

man in France whose income exceeded four hundred livres, a fourth of one year's income, to be paid in three yearly instalments. Ordinary expenses Necker believed he could in future meet by ordinary revenue, for the privileged had not yet been taxed, and the royal households of the king and queen—that perennial resource of a reforming financier—were not yet reduced to the lowest limit. But for the moment he must have extraordinary funds. Unfortunately, whether from a sentimental pandering to the idea of patriotism, or from the practical difficulty of doing anything else, Necker left every man to make his own valuation of the income on which the contribution was based.¹ The municipality of Paris opened six offices, spacious, heated and convenient, for the public in different quarters of the capital, where citizens might declare their income and pay their instalments.² The citizens came, made their statements, not always accurately, and paid instalments, not very promptly. The patriotic contribution savoured somewhat too much of a patriotic tax.

Meantime Necker needed one hundred and seventy million livres over and above the ordinary revenue, and on the 14th of November 1789, he went to the National Assembly with a fresh proposal. He repeated

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. ix. p. 139 *seq.*

² B. M. P., *Municipalités*, R. 227. *Proclamation du 25 oct. 1789 de par le maire.*

the old tale of unpaid taxes, of want of credit, and of expenses incurred by fear of famine. The patriotic contribution was a help, but it would not be fully paid up until April 1792, and the need of the treasury was immediate.

In the year 1776 Turgot had established in France the *Caisse d'Escompte*, a bank intended for the discounting of bills of exchange at a moderate rate, and for receiving such deposits as might be taken to it, of which it might advance ten of its fifteen millions of capital to the treasury on receipt of bills payable at a fixed date.¹ These last regulations Necker had induced the administrators of the *Caisse d'Escompte* to disregard. He had appealed to them on his return to office in 1788, and pleading the barrenness of the treasury had asked for a loan of thirty million livres. The administrators granted the loan. They knew they were exceeding their powers, but they justified their action by the necessity of the State and the securities offered. The first loan was not enough; in the spring and summer of 1789 Necker borrowed again, until by November the sum due to the *Caisse d'Escompte* from the Treasury amounted to sixty million livres.²

¹ See *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 369. *Rapport des Commissaires chargés de vérifier l'état de la Caisse d'Escompte*, also chap. xxiii. of the *Cambridge History*, vol. viii., *French Revolution*, published as this book was going through the press.

² *Archiv. parl.*, vol. x. p. 378. *Situation de la Caisse d'Escompte*.

Necker knew that such a resource must come to an end, and on November 14th he proposed to transform the *Caisse d'Escompte* into a national bank with a privilege of ten, twenty or thirty years, with larger powers, larger capital and an issue of paper notes.¹ The proposal was well received by the Assembly and was sent to its *comité des finances* to be reported upon. There it received but scant attention. With a jealousy of the Crown and its ministers characteristic of the committees of the National Assembly the *comité des finances*, without consulting Necker, had already prepared a scheme of its own for the reform of finance. This scheme the *comité* offered for the consideration of the Assembly on November 16th.² A discussion followed which included both plans. Necker had enemies, "an immense number,"³ we are told, although it was but five months since his recall was deemed a political necessity, and his plan was rejected. Instead of giving fresh powers to the *Caisse d'Escompte* the National Assembly, on December 19th decreed the institution of a "*Caisse de l'extraordinaire*" into which the funds obtained from patriotic contributions, and from all extraordinary sources, were to be paid and used for the extinction of the

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. x. p. 56. *Mémoire sur les finances*.

² See Gomel, Ch., *Histoire financière de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 476 seq.

³ Du Quesnoy, *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 46.

national debt. It also undertook to begin to pay off the debt at once.¹

Now on November 14th Necker had reported a deficit of ninety million livres for 1789 with a probable deficit of eighty million for 1790. To carry out its resolution the Assembly therefore needed one hundred and seventy million livres at once, and the creation of the new *Caisse* or bank did not include the creation of the funds to be employed by it. Where then did the Assembly look for the means with which to fulfil its engagement?

It may be remembered that when in June 1788 Loménie de Brienne, then Minister of Finance, was in great straits for money, he summoned an extraordinary meeting of the clergy, and demanded their help. The clergy refused, alleging that the goods of the church were consecrated to God, and could not be used for the State except by free gift. They advised the king to assemble the States-General, and listen to the voice of the nation. The king obeyed, the States-General met, and in this autumn of 1789 the voice of the nation spoke. "The goods of the clergy," it declared, are only a charge committed to their care. They belong to the nation on the sole condition of providing honourably for public worship and for the main-

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. x. p. 681.

tenance of charitable and educational establishments.”¹ From a general statement such as this it was an easy transition to suggest that the goods of the clergy should be used to meet the special need of the moment. “The State,” said Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, “has long been, and still is, in great need; not one among us but knows it. Its ordinary resources are exhausted, new sources of income must be found, why not in ecclesiastical property?”²

Now the idea of using church property to tide over financial difficulties was the more easily adopted because it fell in with that desire for uniformity, for an all-embracing system of government which was just then the ideal of French politics. To leave the church with her wealth, her immense influence over the great mass of the people, her monopoly of education and of charity independent of national control, was to permit an anomaly altogether at variance with the spirit of the Revolution. But if logical consistency and the need of the treasury urged the step, the decree which actually carried it into effect was a direct result of the 4th of August. On that memorable night the clergy had agreed to give up tithes in kind for a money payment. A few weeks later the

¹ *Archiv. parl.*, vol. ix. p. 147. *Speech of Dupont de Nemours du 24 sep.*

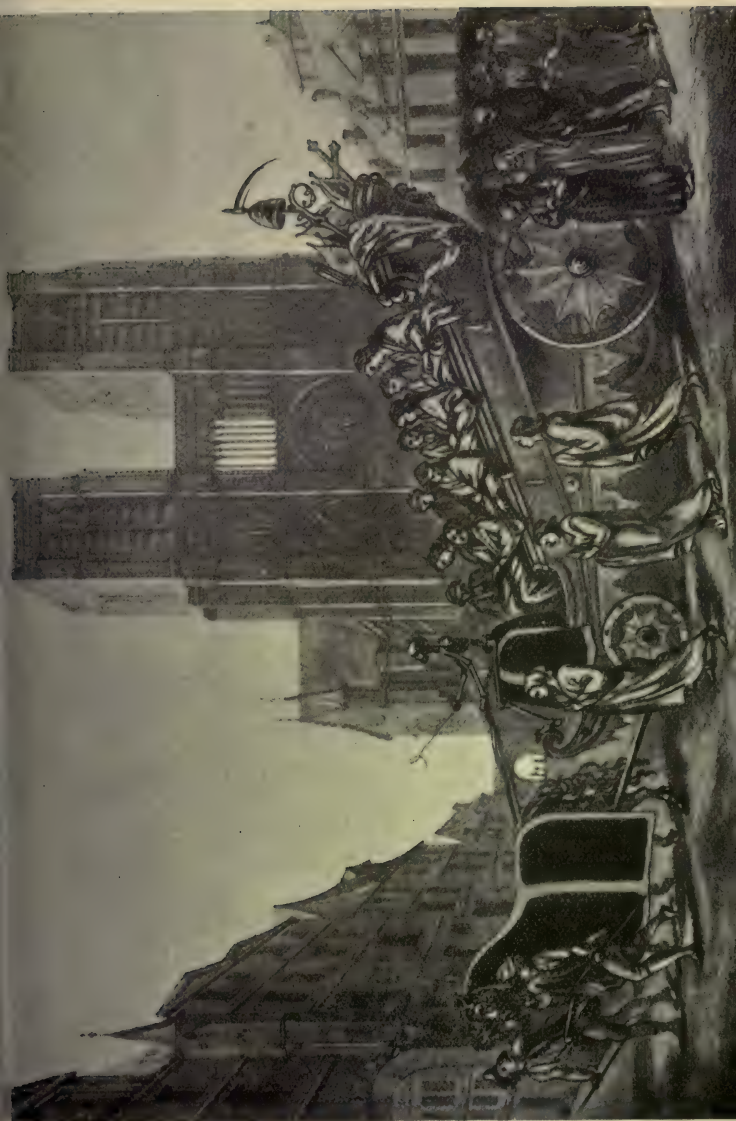
² *Id.*, vol. ix. p. 398.

Assembly decided that tithes should be given up without compensation, thereby depriving the church of that part of her income—about a third—set apart for the maintenance of public worship. The Assembly therefore pledged itself to undertake this duty for the future, entrusting the administration of the funds to the civil authorities.

But to fulfil this pledge the Assembly needed funds, and it proposed to find them by still further depriving the church of her wealth. On October 13th, Mirabeau moved, and on November 2nd the National Assembly decreed that the goods of the church, subject only to a suitable provision for her worship, her ministers, and her poor, were the property of the nation, to be used as occasion offered.¹ About the same time the Assembly asserted its right to alienate Crown lands. Here then were funds with which to fill the *Caisse de l'extraordinaire*, and on December 19th church and crown property to the extent of four hundred million livres was set apart for sale.

The sale of church property was a popular measure, for the people saw in it the long hoped-for balance between the receipts and expenditure of the Exchequer, they saw freedom from taxes, the debt provided for, and building lands and vineyards

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. ix. p. 649, also Lameth, vol. i. p. 165 seq.





long coveted offered for sale.¹ But the actual money to buy these was scarce. The Assembly accordingly also decreed on December 19th the issue of paper-money to the value of the property for sale, that is of four hundred million livres.² Thus arose the *assignats*, so called because land was assigned as their security.³

The decrees which denied to the clergy the right to hold or control church property, and which actually alienated a great part of that property, struck a heavy blow at the church. "Gentlemen of the nation," wrote a wit in the *Petit Journal du Palais-Royal* in November, 1789, "you are invited to attend the funeral procession, service, and burial of the very high, very vain, and very vindictive lord, Monseigneur the clergy of France, who died in the hall of the National Assembly on the 2nd November, 1789, on the day of All Saints. His body will be carried to the *Caisse nationale* in the midst of public rejoicings. . . . His heart," added the writer in unkindly mood, "will go to the devil."⁴ The wits of the Palais-Royal were a little prema-

¹ Gomel, Ch., *Histoire financière*, vol. i. p. 447.

² *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 681.

³ These *assignats* were to be notes of the value of 1000 livres, and were to bear interest at five per cent. One million worth was to be destroyed in 1791, another in 1792, 80 millions in 1793 and 4, and the rest in 1795.

⁴ *Petit Journal du Palais-Royal*.

ture. Monseigneur the clergy of France was not yet dead, but the principle of popular control had been admitted into the affairs of the church, and it did not end with property.

The question of monastic orders followed, and affords us a curious instance of the way in which theory and expediency worked hand in hand to undermine the proud ecclesiastical system of the old regime. On October 28th some nuns of the Order of the Immaculate Conception wrote to the National Assembly, and asked for its interference in a case of undue pressure of monastic vows on certain novices.¹ This opened up the whole question of monastic orders, a question too important to be decided off-hand. The Assembly, therefore, remitted its consideration to the *comité ecclésiastique*, and meantime, in order to be consistent with the Constitution, and to protect the liberty of the subject, decreed that until that committee had reported, and the matter was fully debated, the law would not recognise perpetual vows taken by either man or woman.²

The Assembly, however, was by no means unfriendly to the religious orders, and when, on December 17th, the *comité ecclésiastique* made its proposals, these were moderate and considerate.

¹ See *Le Point du Jour.*, vol. iii. p. 481, for letter.

² *Coll. des Décrets*, vol. i. p. 78. *Décret du 28 oct. 1789.*

They allowed those of the *religieux* who wished to leave their Order to do so, and provided them with a small pension, and they permitted those who wished to die under the shelter of the cloister to remain.¹ It thus satisfied the demands of consistency.

But expediency was not forgotten. To this same *comité* was entrusted the task of deciding what ecclesiastical property could best be sold to provide funds for the *Caisse de l'extraordinaire*. For some time the religious orders in France had been declining both in numbers and popularity; many monasteries had only two, three, or four inmates, and some of the famous abbeys only five or six.² It was, therefore, natural that the *comité ecclésiastique* should begin its work of alienation with the monasteries, and accordingly the proposals of December 17th, which left residence in the cloister a matter of choice, suggested that those monks who remained should leave the monasteries in towns and take refuge in the monasteries of their Order in the country. "The presence of the monks in the country districts," said the report, "will render a service to agriculture, and their absence from large towns will enable you to acquire that portion of their property left in towns, a most

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 625, *Rapport du comité ecclésiastique sur les ordres religieux*.

² Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. i. p. 43.

valuable resource in our present critical position.”¹ Thus began the suppression of individual monasteries. “Not,” says M. Aulard, “from any philosophical reason, but because money was wanted and there was no other way of getting it.”²

Soon, however, it ceased to be a question of houses and became one of the existence of religious Orders as such. On February 11th the discussion on the monastic orders, adjourned from December, was resumed, and their abolition on the ground of expediency was openly urged. “In abolishing the monastic orders,” said Dupont de Nemours, “we do good service to humanity as well as to the finances.”³ So important a question however was not allowed to rest on expediency. The abstract question of rights was urged. The right of society to destroy institutions hurtful to society was maintained by Pétion, the right of man to live free by Barnave. “It is enough,” he cried, “that the existence of monks is incompatible with the rights of man and the needs of society. . . . The religious orders are contrary to public order; subject to independent heads, they are contrary also to society,” and he moved that the National Assembly decree, as an Article of the Constitution, that religious orders

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. x. p. 625.

² Aulard, A., *Les congrégations et la révolution française*, p. 16.

³ *Moniteur*, séance du 11 février 1790.

and congregations be, and for ever remain, suppressed in France without possibility of revival.¹ On February 13th Barnave's proposal became law.

Suppression, however, did not mean dispersion. The State undertook to provide for the *religieux* who remained as well as those who left the cloister; vows were no longer made, monasteries and convents no longer recruited, but the religious Orders remained, even if on sufferance.

This, then, was the second great change in ecclesiastical affairs. The next few months were to see one greater still. There was in the National Assembly a group of Jansenist deputies, "men of ardent piety and austere manners,"² inheritors of the doctrines and traditions of the Arnaulds and Port-Royal, who had long deplored the laxity of manners, the self-indulgence and rapacity which characterised too many of the higher clergy. With them were united those of the deputies who were opposed to the pretensions of the court of Rome.

The proposal these men now made—that as the people chose their municipal, departmental and national representatives, they should also choose their spiritual directors—was urged on religious grounds, on a return to the usages of the primitive church. "Almost every abuse," said M. Martineau in urging

¹ *Moniteur*, séance du 12 février 1790.

² Lameth, *L'histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 363.

his motion, "has arisen from a departure from the spirit of the earliest institutions, the primitive discipline of the church was the work of the apostles, the result of lessons taught by their divine Master, how then could it fail to be the most holy, the most in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel, the most fitted to the progress and maintenance of religion? . . . The best men, the most distinguished writers, have striven for over eight hundred years to restore it. Councils have attempted to bring it back and have failed. Private interests and human passions have always presented insurmountable obstacles; it required the Revolution, it required the power with which you are invested, to undertake so great a work." ¹

Happily for the speaker, the discipline of the primitive church was, or could be made to appear, very much the same thing as the new Constitution of France. "In the primitive church no such thing was known as the right of a land-holder to force pastors on the people; in the primitive church bishops, *curés* and other ministers of religion were chosen by the people, and as they existed for the people, by whom could they be more suitably chosen?" ²

The new division of the kingdom provided an

¹ *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xiii. p. 167. Speech of Martineau on April 21st, 1790.

² *Id.*, p. 170.

instrument to hand. "From the day of publication of the present decree," ran the act, there was to be "one only way of providing bishops and *curés*," and that was by popular election. The bishops were to be chosen by the electors, their diocese was to be co-extensive with the department, and without permission from the Directory of his department no bishop might leave his see for more than a fortnight. In like manner the *curés* were to be chosen by the primary assemblies, and must obtain leave of absence from the Directory of their district. These proposals were accepted by the Assembly and decreed on July 12th, 1790.

This transference of control from an ecclesiastical hierarchy to civil authorities was called the civil constitution of the clergy, because it was supposed to deal only with the outward organisation of the church and not to touch dogma. But although the French church had long held herself largely independent of the control of the Holy See, the appointment of bishops, abbots and priors made by the king was subject to a veto from the Pope. "By the divine mercy and by the grace of the Apostolic See," ran the old formula of appointment. This formula was now discarded, for under the civil constitution of the clergy the sanction of the Pope was held unnecessary to the appointment of church dignitaries. Bishops might write to the

Pope and inform him of their election, but that was all, and if any dispute arose about their appointment the final decision lay with the civil court of the district. Nor was this everything. The decree of July 12th enacted that no bishop should in future be consecrated and no *curé* ordained until he had sworn "to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the king," as well as "to watch faithfully over the flock entrusted to his care."¹ This oath was made obligatory, not only on the newly-appointed clergy but on those already holding office. It was a severe test, for to swear fidelity to the nation was tantamount to approving of the decrees which most churchmen considered detrimental to religion and disloyal to the Pope.

And yet it ought always to be remembered that in making these changes the National Assembly repudiated any suggestion of disrespect to religion. In the course of the discussion M. de la Fare, Bishop of Nancy, hurt and shocked by the remarks which seemed to him almost blasphemous, moved that before going further the Assembly should declare the Catholic religion the State religion of France. "There is no one in this Assembly" said Dupont de Nemours "who is not already convinced that the Catholic is the national religion . . . we cannot deliberate on a

¹ See Carnot, M. H., *Mémoires de Grégoire*, vol. ii. p. 14.

certainty,"¹ and from its very respect for religion the Assembly refused to open the question. It was not, as has been well said, "because they were sceptics, but because they were idealists"² that the men of 1789 and 1790 wrought changes in the church.

The institution of the civil constitution of the clergy marks a decisive point in the history of the Revolution. Hitherto the great bulk of the *curés*, "the men who conducted public worship, who directed the schools, who presided over the local *Compagnies de Charité*, who exercised social influence on the people and whom the faithful obeyed"³ had been much in sympathy with the more advanced party in the National Assembly. It was the *curés* who, in June 1789, left the Order of the Clergy to join the Third Estate; it was they who, on August 4th, first agreed to abolish tithes, and even when the Assembly proposed the secularising of church property, the *curés* had not been much discomposed. They best understood the need of reform, they least profited from the ancient wealth.

But the civil constitution and the oath it imposed shook the allegiance of the priests, and with their allegiance that of the people, to the great Consti-

¹ *Moniteur*, séance du 13 février 1790.

² Bardoux, *La bourgeoisie française*, p. 41.

³ *L'œuvre sociale de la révolution française*, ed. by Faguet, p. 291.

tution they had till now been so ready to support. It first divided France against herself; "it was this movement," says M. Aulard, himself a strong Republican, "which, failing of its purpose, brought about a decisive rupture between the Church and the Revolution, and created circumstances from which arose civil war, foreign war, violence, misfortune, and the partial failure of the Revolution itself."¹

¹ Aulard, A. *Les congrégations et la Révolution française*, p. 30.

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING AND THE CONSTITUTION.



TALLEYRAND.

ABOUT three o'clock in the afternoon of February 19th, 1790, a condemned culprit, his feet bare and a rope round his neck, stood, in accordance with the custom of the day, in front of Notre Dame to hear his crime and sentence read to a listening crowd, before

going to the Place de Grève to suffer capital punishment.¹

The prisoner was a certain Marquis de Favras of questionable nobility, who had served in the Guard of the Comte de Provence, had been at Versailles on October 5th, and was known to be

¹ B. M. P., *Favras*, R. 164., *Testament et Mort du Marquis de Favras* and *Journal de Paris* du 20 fév. 1790.

a political adventurer. The offence for which he was about to suffer was that of plotting to raise a force of thirty thousand men to carry off the king, and at the same time assassinate Lafayette, Commander of the National Guard, and Bailly, Mayor of Paris. The Marquis insisted now, as he had insisted at his trial, on his innocence; the witnesses against him were men of little consequence, but "his life," he was told, "was a sacrifice he owed to the public peace."¹ It was the first death in which the Revolution admitted the plea of the public good—a plea which was made the excuse for so much bloodshed a few years later.

The incident was not in itself very important, but Paris was still hungry and unquiet; disturbance and riot were rife in the provinces. The administration of justice was undergoing reform and was meantime ineffective, and the continued residence of the king in his capital, seemed the pledge of better things.

Hitherto Louis had lagged behind the Revolution. "Father of the People," "Restorer of French Liberty" though he was, he was these things against, rather than by his will, and his enforced residence in Paris was a sign that at bottom his people distrusted, even if they loved their king.

¹ B. M. P., Favras, R. 164, *Testament et Mort du Marquis de Favras* and *Journal de Paris* du 20 fév. 1790.

It was this sense of distrust that caused the news of the charge on which Favras was arrested to strike consternation in the capital. To remove it, and to satisfy men that the king had no intention of leaving Paris or evading the responsibilities of a constitutional ruler, his ministers suggested that he should pay some public tribute to the Constitution.

Accordingly on Thursday, February 4th, 1790, the deputies in the Salle du Manège were surprised by a message that the king would that day visit the National Assembly, but without ceremony. The message was received with enthusiasm and hasty preparations were made. The secretaries' desks were removed, a carpet laid down, a velvet covering embroidered with fleur-de-lys flung over the President's chair; after which business was resumed until the king arrived. He came accompanied only by his ministers, wearing a plain black suit and carrying his hat in his hand, and going up to the President's chair at once began his address.¹ "Gentlemen," he said, "the gravity of public affairs brings me among you . . . old bonds are loosened, justice is suspended, discontent, bitter animosities, unrest, have taken hold of the spirit of the people. . . . The old channels of authority have been disturbed, and yet I have

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, No. 12.

been able to preserve the kingdom, if not in the complete tranquillity for which we hope, yet in sufficient tranquillity to enable it to receive the gift of a wise and well-ordered liberty. . . . I think the moment now come when it is for the interest of the State that I associate myself more closely and more openly with all that you have proposed for the welfare of France. . . . I therefore promise to defend and maintain that constitutional liberty whose principles are sanctioned by the will of the nation and by my own. I will do more. In concert with the queen, who shares all my sentiments, I will educate my son in accordance with the new order of things . . . I will teach him that a wise Constitution will save him from the dangers of inexperience." And he concluded a long speech in these words, "Let us all, from this day forward, following my example, be moved by one opinion, one interest, one purpose ;—attachment to the new Constitution and ardent desire for the peace, happiness and prosperity of France." ¹

A burst of applause followed the king's speech ; the President could hardly find words in which to express the gratitude of the Assembly ; and a motion made and at once carried, to the effect that the Assembly should there and then follow the king's

¹ *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, No. 12.

example and promise fidelity to the Constitution shows how seriously his words were taken.

"I swear to be faithful to the nation, the law and the king, and to uphold with all my might the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the king." In these words the deputies one by one swore to uphold the Constitution and when the long roll of their names was ended,¹ the officials of the Salle du Manège, those present in benches reserved for representatives of commerce, for *députés suppléans*,² as well as the spectators in the galleries, asked that they too might take the oath. It was a moment of enthusiasm, but the oath was not lightly taken. "You are fully aware how august and how sacred is the ceremony which we are about to celebrate" said the President before he himself repeated the new formula.

There can be no question but that the Assembly considered the king's part in this solemn acts as a binding engagement.³ As such it was regarded throughout the country. From end to end of France, beginning with the municipality and districts of Paris, men swore the civil oath, feeling

¹ It must be remembered that neither the Civil Constitution of the clergy, nor the suppression of monastic orders was as yet a part of the Constitution.

² *Députés suppléans*, men chosen at the same time as the deputies to fill their place in case of need.

³ *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xi. p. 431 *seq.*

themselves thereby more closely bound to their king. Loyal addresses poured in, Te Deums were sung. Marie-Antoinette herself was regarded with greater leniency, for had she not met the deputation that accompanied her husband from the Assembly and repeated his promise to bring up the Dauphin to respect that Constitution which was then the idol of the people? A few months later the king's oath was to receive confirmation in the eyes of all Europe.

By a decree on the constitution of the army voted in February 1790, it was agreed that each year on the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille the troops should renew their oath of fidelity to the king, nation and Constitution.¹ But this year it was proposed to celebrate at the same time the welding of France into one by the substitution of departments for provinces. "A new order of things has arisen," said Bailly in a speech to the Assembly early in June. "The division caused by the existence of provinces no longer remains . . . one single name, that of 'Frenchmen' embraces everyone."² "Ten months have scarcely passed since the memorable day when from the walls of a fallen Bastille arose the sudden shout, 'Frenchmen, we are free.' On the anniversary of that day let another cry more moving still be heard, 'Frenchmen, we are brothers.'"³

¹ *Décret du 28 février 1790.* ² *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xvi. p. 117.

³ *Id.*, p. 118. Address drawn up by Bailly "from the citizens of Paris to all Frenchmen."

And a national *fête* was proposed, at which deputations of the National Guard and of the civic authorities from each of the new departments as well as representatives from the regular troops should meet in the capital, and with united voice swear fidelity to the Constitution. In such a ceremony the king must have his part.

The proposal thus made to celebrate the fact of a united France met with the readier acceptance because it was hoped that it would also serve a practical end. The conduct of the army was causing much uneasiness. A spirit of insubordination and unrest was abroad.¹ The troops were excited by the words rather than by the ideas of liberty and equality, and it gave colour to their discontent that their pay was in arrears. A great representative federation held at Paris on the first renewal of the military oath would, it was thought, prove a diversion and conduce to a spirit of greater loyalty to the Assembly, and to the king who had identified himself with the Constitution.

The place chosen for the *fête* was the Champ de Mars, a waste piece of land lying on the left bank of the Seine just outside the city walls. Here in olden days the kings met the lieges once every year to confer with them on matters of

¹ See *Arch. parl.*, vol. xvi, June 4th, *Discours de La Tour du Pin*, Minister of War.

state. It was an armed assembly that met then, for every freeman in mediæval times carried weapons, and it was an assembly of soldiers and soldier-citizens that was to meet now in presence of the Father of the Country. The idea fired the people and the utmost enthusiasm prevailed. The *Fête de la Fédération* was to be a representative gathering such as the annals of France had never known.

The last great *fête* held in Paris had been that arranged to celebrate the marriage of Louis and Marie-Antoinette in May 1770, when the fall of stands erected on the Place Louis XV. for a display of fireworks had changed the day of rejoicing into one of mourning for the injured and the dead. To avoid any such accident on this occasion the authorities decided to dig out an amphitheatre in the Champ de Mars itself, large enough to hold one hundred and sixty thousand spectators seated and one hundred thousand standing, and to leave an area in which from fifty to sixty thousand armed delegates could take up their position.¹

Twelve thousand workmen were engaged, but the work had to be completed within six weeks, and it soon became evident that the men engaged could not possibly accomplish the task. A letter appeared in a Paris newspaper, signed by a Garde National, in which he proposed that his comrades

¹ See Toulangeon, *Histoire de France*, vol. i. p. 215 seq.

should volunteer their aid. The appeal was warmly received, "The divisions of the National Guard took it in turn to dig during the hours in which the regular workmen rested. Commandants, captains, soldiers furnished themselves with pick-axe and barrow, and loyally took orders from the least important overseer's clerk."¹

Nor did the voluntary help end here. The trades followed the example of the National Guard. The charcoal burners and wigmakers arrived to the sound of drums; butchers, market-porters, water-carriers, journeymen gardeners with lettuces tied to their pick-axes, printers with "Liberty of the Press" printed on their paper caps, worked as if their lives depended on their efforts.² "Students from their colleges hurried gaily to the work at the Champ de Mars; monks, priests, even women, toiled side by side with the trader."³ Whole villages, headed by their Mayor, in tri-colour scarf and pick-axe on shoulder; whole families, master, servants, children, turned out and lent their aid. No unwilling helpers were permitted. A young Abbé, very carefully dressed, appeared on the Champ de Mars, and stood regarding the scene with a condescending, almost a pitying eye. "Get

¹ *Courrier de Paris*, vol. xiv., le 6 juillet 1790.

² *Id.*, du 10 juillet.

³ Mercier, *Nouveau tableau de la révolution*, vol. i. p. 69.

a wheel-barrow," cried a worker. He obeyed and began to fill it, but with such slow, indifferent movements that he irritated an ardent patriot close by. "Let go the barrow," he exclaimed, "your touch profanes it," and leaving his own, he seized that of the Abbé, rushed it outside the Champ de Mars, and there emptied its contents, lest the earth removed by an unwilling worker should mingle with that dug out by enthusiasts.¹

Nor was the manual work done at the Champ de Mars the only sign of the prevailing enthusiasm. Political clubs complained that Paris was so excited over the Federation that no one would attend to the elections for the new municipality, the first regulated by a decree of the National Assembly, and therefore the first not provisional in its character. Accordingly the elections, arranged for July 5th, were postponed until after the *fête*. The Parisian ladies asked to be allowed to swear on the Champ de Mars to educate their children in fidelity to the nation, the law, and the king.² It was proposed to free all prisoners for debt, so that they too might be present,³ and on June 19th a deputation of foreigners—English, Dutch, Russian, Poles, Prussians, Germans, Swedes, Swiss, Italians,

¹ Mercier, *Nouveau tableau de la révolution*, vol. i. p. 76.

² Arch. nat., C. 82 No. 817, *Projet communiqué à la Commune de Paris*.

³ Bib. nat. MSS. nouv. acq. fr. 2638, fol. 3.

Armenians, Spaniards, Indians, Arabs, and Chaldees, all wearing their national dress—went to the National Assembly and begged to take part in the Federation of July 14th.

The tribute of these isolated individual foreigners seemed to the National Assembly the tribute of the whole world; “the *fête*,” said the President, in reply to their address, “will no longer be one of the nation but of the universe.”¹ Then in an access of chivalry towards the strangers who were to come within the gates, Alexandre de Lameth moved that four symbolic figures chained as slaves to the statue of Louis XIV., in the Place des Victoires, and representing four provinces conquered by him, should be destroyed. “Let us respect monuments of the arts, but wipe away all that commemorates despotism and bondage.”²

Once again, as on the night of the 4th of August, 1789, the impulse of the moment carried the Assembly too far. On the proposal to destroy all bronze monuments “created to flatter pride,” followed that to abolish such living monuments as the titles of duke, count, marquis, etc. “How then,” cried a member of the Right, “will you commemorate the fact that such a one was ennobled for having on such a day saved the State?” “You

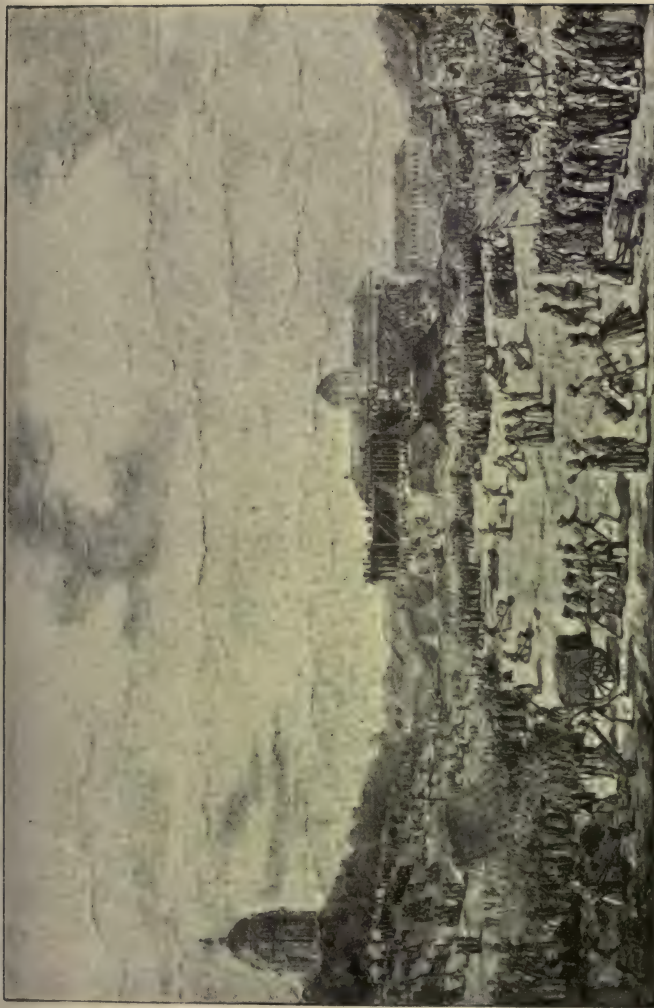
¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. xvi. p. 373. See also *Ami du roi* (Crapart) du 21 juin 1790.

² Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 431.

can say," replied Lafayette, "that such a one saved the State on such a day." "If you do this thing," the Abbé Maury urged, "you affect fifty thousand families; the nobles are more sensitive over honorary than over pecuniary rights, and you will cause many to emigrate."¹ The Abbé proved in the right, but the bill was passed; titles, coats-of-arms, crests, and liveries were abolished, and Lafayette became Monsieur Motier, Mirabeau plain Gabriel Riquetti. In its generous but mistaken impulse the National Assembly forgot that monuments may also be raised to democratic vanity.

• It was only natural that that worship of the new Constitution which was to find its apotheosis in the *fête* of July, should develop the democratic tendency of the Revolution. Thus we not only find titles abolished, but in the arrangements for the great day itself we see care taken not to magnify the office of the king. On the 9th of July the National Assembly decreed that the king *be requested* to take the command of the National Guards of France. To the objection that Louis was *ex officio* head of all the armed forces, Barnave replied by explaining the difference between regular and volunteer troops, and the words remained. On the 11th it was decided that the king should take his place among the deputies, occupying a chair

¹ *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xvi. p. 374.



TRAVAUX DU CHAMP DE MARS POUR LA CONFÉDÉRATION DU 14 JUILLET 1790. PAR LES CITOYENS DE PARIS

Louis XVI, y travailla le 9.

Paris chez Depont, rue Marmourel, n° 41.



on the left hand of the President and placed on the same level as his, instead of on a throne raised above all others, as had been the invariable custom on occasions of ceremony. It was even proposed to introduce the words "I, first Citizen," into the oath to be taken by the king instead of "I, king of the French," but this was negatived.¹

These things the king took very quietly. A few days before the delegates or fédérés, as they were called, arrived, he rode out to the Champ de Mars to see for himself what was going on. He was received with the utmost cordiality, for whatever the National Assembly might feel about the office of a king, Louis personally was popular with his people. He had accepted the Constitution and he was furthering, as far as he could, the great *fête* in its honour. At the news of his arrival all the drums in the field beat a welcome; the people formed themselves into a body-guard, and conducted him from one point of interest to another. Presently he asked for a wheel-barrow, threw in a few shovels-full of earth, and, wheel-barrow in hand, continued his inspection to cries of "Long live the king," "Long live our friend, our father."²

A few days later Louis, on receiving a deputation of the *fédérés*, took up the words he had heard on

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. xvii. p. 12. Also *Ami du roi*, 9-11 juillet 1790.

² *Courrier de Paris*, vol. xiv., le 10 juillet 1790.

the Champ de Mars, and replying to the address made to him said, "Repeat to your fellow-citizens that the king is their father, brother, friend. Tell them that I will watch over them, live for them, and, if need be, die for my people."¹ Barnave, speaking a year afterwards said, "Had the king only known how to take advantage of the popular feeling of the moment we (of the Left) must have been lost."² But Louis did not know.

By the 13th of July the *fédérés* had arrived, and at six o'clock on the morning of the fourteenth the long procession began to form on the boulevards between the Porte Saint-Antoine and the Porte Saint-Denis. The *fédérés* were divided into two great companies, between which marched the regular troops. They were preceded by the Assembly of Electors of Paris,³ the Presidents of the Districts, and scholars of the Military Schools. At the Tuileries' entrance to the Salle du Manège the Municipality awaited the deputies of the National Assembly, and together they joined the procession as soon as it reached the Place Louis Quinze.⁴ During the night the National Guard of Paris and many of the

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xvii. p. 83.

² Rocheterie, *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 184, note.

³ The Assembly of Electors met for the last time in connection with the *fête* of July 14, 1790.

⁴ See *Confédération nationale, ordre de marche*, Bib. nat. Lb³⁹3758.

spectators had taken their places on the Champ de Mars.

At the entrance to the field was a triumphal arch, and at the end of the arena, close by the military school, stood the platform reserved for the king and National Assembly. But the object which commanded attention was the great altar raised to the country in the centre of the arena. Patriotic, not sacred, subjects were carved on the four sides of its pedestal, and on one panel were these words, "Ponder on the three sacred words which are the warrant of our decrees, the nation, the law, the king. The nation, that is you ; the law, that again is you ; and the king, he is the guardian of the law."¹ Could the attitude of the Revolution towards the Monarchy be more clearly expressed ?

It was about mid-day when the procession left the Place Louis Quinze, and about three o'clock before the different companies making up the Federation had taken their places. As soon as they had done so the king came out from the *École militaire*, cannon boomed, and the people shouted, "*Vive le roi !*"²

It was an imposing scene which met the eyes of the "Father of his People." A mass of over three hundred thousand spectators filled the amphitheatre

¹ See *Ami du roi*, du 25 juillet 1790.

² *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xvii. p. 84.

and the field beyond ; fifty thousand troops stood on the arena, and in the centre of all was the great altar with steps leading up to it on every side ; sixty priests clad in white were grouped round it and Talleyrand, the young Bishop of Autun, celebrant of the mass, stood in their midst.

As soon as Louis had taken his place the banners of the National Guards and of the regular troops were placed round the altar, and there, after the celebration of the mass, were blessed. Then Lafayette, riding up to the *estrade* where sat the king, dismounted and asked for the royal orders. The king gave him the form of oath—that already sworn to by the troops, with the addition of the words, “to hold myself bound to my countrymen by the indissoluble bonds of brotherhood.” Lafayette remounted and rode to the altar, and there in face of all the people repeated, as commander of the first National Guard in France, the words just given him ; the *fédérés* joined their voices to his, a volley of cannon, cries of “ *Vive le roi !* ” “ *Vive la nation !* ” the clash of arms and a burst of trumpets announced to the spectators afar off ; the taking of the oath.

The military oath taken, the President and deputies rose and with one voice repeated the civil oath already sworn to on February fourth. Last of all the king rose ; “ I, King of the French,” said Louis, stretching out his hand towards the altar,

“swear to use all the power delegated to me by the constitutional law of the State to maintain the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by me, and to enforce the execution of the laws.” As he did so, Marie-Antoinette left her place, and advanced with the little Dauphin in her arms, as if to include the child in his father’s words. Thus she too, renewed the pledge she had given six months before. A solemn *Te Deum* was chanted and the great Assembly broke up.

The *fête* of the Federation was over. Not, however, the facts which it symbolised. In it we see the first general recognition by Frenchmen of a united France, bound by a common oath which placed fidelity to the law, as expressed in the will of the people, above allegiance to the king; and we see the passionate attachment with which this united France regarded her Constitution.

It was to glorify the Constitution that the citizens of Paris worked so hard, and loyal as was their feeling towards the king it was Louis, Restorer of Liberty, not Louis, King of France, whom they revered. Just in so far as he adopted and magnified the new order of things were the people of France likely to remain loyal. When, therefore, the king stretched out his hand towards the altar of the country and swore in presence of hundreds of thousands of his subjects,—in

presence of representatives from every district in the kingdom, and of the very troops to whom he must, in the last extremity have recourse,—the people believed he was with them, and that his act on July 14th did but prove the sincerity of that of February 4th. In the presence of his people the king had set his seal to the new order, and he could not go back. This was a fact which Louis never fully grasped, and because he did not grasp it he lost his throne.

CHAPTER XVI.

MIRABEAU AND THE COURT.



GUSTAVE III., KING OF SWEDEN.

“IF you have any means of making yourself heard by the king and queen, persuade them that France and they themselves are lost if the royal family does not leave Paris. I am thinking over a plan to effect this; are you in a position to assure them that they may count upon me?”¹

So wrote Mirabeau to his friend the Comte de la Marck on October 7th, 1789, the day after Louis took up his abode in the Tuileries. Neither the offer nor the plan came to anything then, but in the spring of 1790 a little knot of friends, the Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, the Comte

¹ Bacourt, *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck*, vol. i. p. 119.

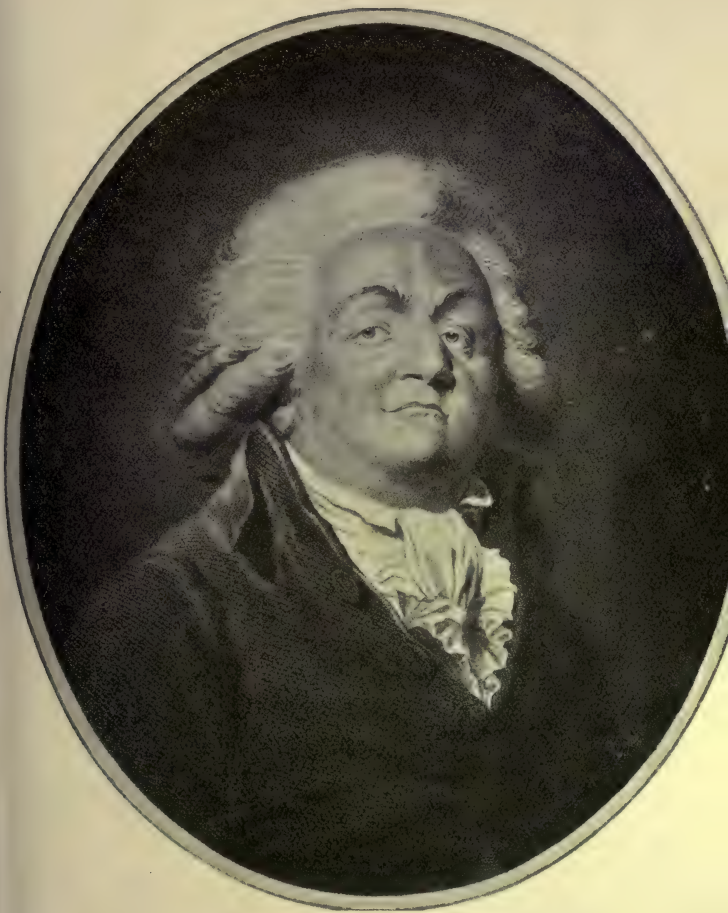
de la Marck, and the Archbishop of Toulouse, Keeper of the Seals, effected an arrangement by which Mirabeau became secret adviser to the Court.¹

No man living possessed the same qualifications. Ardent constitutionalist as he was, Mirabeau had a firm faith in monarchical government. Ready to withstand any attempt at despotism, he yet believed that no Constitution was sound that had not a strong executive. He had, therefore, in August 1789, voted for an absolute veto, and for the same reason, in May 1790, he did what he could to preserve for the king one of his last and most ancient prerogatives. In the spring of 1790 a quarrel arose which threatened war between England and Spain. France, or at least her king and his ministers, held themselves bound by the *Pacte de Famille*² to support Spain, and Louis gave orders that fourteen men of war should be made ready for service. He then, on May 14th, sent a message to the National Assembly and asked for a subsidy wherewith to pay the cost.³

¹ Bacourt, *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck*, vol. i. p. 136 seq. As the price of his future services, Mirabeau accepted the payment of his debts and the promise of a pension, but he did not for this barter his independence of speech.

² *Pacte de Famille*, an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the French and Spanish branch of the House of Bourbon; signed in 1761.

³ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xv. p. 510.



MIRABEAU.

From a Drawing by Guérin engraved by Fiesinger.



"No one," said Alexandre de Lameth, "can blame the measures taken by the king, but the incident raises a question of principle. Is an Assembly entrusted with making the Constitution and with fixing the attributions of power to delegate to the king the right of declaring war?"¹ The debate was keen and the interest taken in it was intense. This time it was the upper and educated classes that filled the tribunes. Ambassadors and diplomatists listened with eager and astonished ears to the raising of a question hitherto considered the indisputable right of kings. On May 22nd, despite a speech in which Mirabeau is said to have excelled himself, the Assembly decreed "that the right of peace or war belongs to the nation." To depute such a right to the king, it was urged, was to provide him with a means of escaping from his obligations to the Constitution; since a war with any country might furnish a pretext for a war against the Revolution.

Shortly after this Mirabeau wrote his first "Note to the Court." From that time until his death on April 3rd, 1791, he faithfully fulfilled his part. He gave his opinion on current events, pointed out the best way of meeting difficulties while still imminent, the best way of repairing mistakes when made, and he kept steadily in view

¹ Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 313.

his purpose of cementing, as far as possible, the relations of the Crown with the Assembly.

In his scheme Marie-Antoinette played an important part, for it was on her influence over the king that Mirabeau based his hope of success. "I professed Monarchical principles," he wrote in June 1790, "when I saw only feebleness at court, and knowing nothing of the lofty soul and intelligence of the daughter of Maria-Theresa, could not count upon this august auxiliary."¹ "The king has only one man about him and that is his wife," he wrote a little later. "I like to think," he adds, "that she would not wish for life without her crown, but of this I am certain that she will not keep her life if she cannot keep her crown."² "She is very great, very noble, and very unfortunate," he exclaimed after his memorable interview with her on July 3rd at Saint-Cloud.³ This confidence in the queen was exaggerated, but was not altogether groundless. Marie-Antoinette knew her own mind and was quite as clear as Mirabeau himself, that her only safety lay in the re-establishment of the royal authority. Unfortunately, Marie-Antoinette's

¹ Bacourt, A. de, *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck*, vol. ii. p. 25. *Première note pour la cour.*

² *Id.*, p. 41. *Seconde note pour la cour.*

³ Viel-Castel, H. de, *Marie-Antoinette et la révolution française*, p. 299; *Récit de M. du Saillant, neveu de Mirabeau.*

plan for keeping her crown was not that of Mirabeau.

There were three points on which Mirabeau insisted above all. First, that the king must secure the support of the great mass of the nation. Second, that he must preserve for himself sufficient independence to exert a real influence on the doings of the Assembly; and third, that he must owe nothing to foreign interference.

To secure the first Mirabeau would have had the king foster public opinion. "Until the Revolution," he wrote in July, 1790, "the royal authority was incomplete, because not founded on law; inadequate, because it relied on an armed force rather than on public opinion; now it is stronger than ever before because based on law, and sanctioned by the people's will."¹ At the same time Mirabeau did not consider the Monarchy as conceived by the National Assembly a perfect system of government. "Its one danger," he insisted, "is the loss of executive power, a power without which the royal authority is a mere phantom," and he wished the people to see to it that the National Assembly no longer retained a power "which the nation never gave it."² For Mirabeau knew that as soon as the present Assembly had completed its

¹ Bacourt, vol. ii. p. 74, *Huitième note pour la cour*

² *Id.*

work of framing the Constitution it must dissolve, and he looked to its successor to make good the mistakes incurred by the inexperience of this first or Constituent Assembly. He therefore advised the Court to show itself friendly to the popular side, to strengthen its relations with the provinces, and by an appeal to that public opinion on which the monarchy rested, to create a party strong enough to influence the return of the members of the new Assembly.¹

On the second point,—that the king must have a greater independence,—Mirabeau was still more emphatic. But he foresaw that so long as the king and Assembly were controlled and hampered by the influence of the capital this was impossible, and he therefore urged the king to leave Paris; but he did so on certain definite lines. If the king left Paris he must leave with the knowledge and, if possible, with the goodwill of the Assembly, and he must make it clear by proclamation in every province in France that he did so not to escape from, but to strengthen, the Constitution.²

Now the voluntary acceptance of an unfinished Constitution, and the solemn oath taken on July 14th, made it very difficult for Louis to follow

¹ Bacourt, vol. ii. p. 225 *seq.*, *Trentième note pour la cour.*

² *Treizième note pour la cour.*

Mirabeau's advice. Henceforth any opposition which the king might offer to, any modification he might propose on a decree was liable to be held by the advanced party as an act of disloyalty towards the Constitution, while a proposal to leave Paris on any terms was sure to be regarded by the populace as little less than treachery. By insisting on such a step, Mirabeau ran the risk of exciting civil war. To Mirabeau such a risk was not an unmitigated evil. He held that in the present state of France a civil war might give France the leaders she so much needed and save liberty from becoming license. Terrible resource as it was, he infinitely preferred it to a foreign war "which would set France at variance with all Europe, and create twenty civil wars within the land."¹

Louis and Marie-Antoinette were of a very different mind. To spill the blood of his subjects was at all times hateful to the king, and neither he nor the queen had any hope from civil war. They did not wish for a revised Constitution, but for a modified old regime, and their only real hope was in the interference of the European powers. On this point, and it was a crucial one, they were entirely at variance with their adviser. "To retreat to Metz or any frontier town," wrote Mirabeau in October 1789, "would be to declare civil war and

¹ Bacourt, vol. ii. pp. 74 et 225, *Huitième et trentième notes.*

to abdicate; . . . a king who is the sole safeguard of his people does not fly from them. . . . To retreat into the interior and rally the nobles would be still more dangerous . . . it would be to choose a few individuals as against a great people, it would be to enter on civil war at enormous cost.”¹

These however were exactly the schemes proposed by the *émigrés*—the men who fled from France after the fall of the Bastille and again after the events of October, and with whom Marie Antoinette was identified in the eyes of the people. Led by the Comte d’Artois and the Prince de Condé they looked for salvation to the nobles and to foreign aid. “I will go,” said the Prince de Condé in his manifesto of July 1790, “at the head of the nobility of all nations, and followed by all the faithful subjects of the king, and deliver if I can this unfortunate monarch.”² They considered themselves the “true France” and their interference the only hope of the Monarchy.

Their first effort was to raise an army of French nobles as a nucleus for the hoped-for foreign troops. Proclamations were drawn up and distributed in France inviting the nobles to leave their homes and join the princes, “their natural leaders.” But the

¹ Bacourt, vol. i. pp. 361-382, *Mémoire fait par le comte de Mirabeau après les évènements des 5 et 6 octobre 1789*.

² Daudet, E., *Coblentz, 1789-1793*, p. 39.

French gentlemen were attached to their homes, and were difficult to persuade. A miserable handful, only about a hundred in all, responded to the appeal, and "with tears in their eyes" left France.¹ Failing in their appeal to the nobles the *émigrés* tried to foment the disturbances caused by religious strife. By its attitude towards the church the Assembly had placed a powerful weapon in the hands of the enemies of the Revolution, and in the south of France something like a crusade was being carried on against the ecclesiastical decrees. The movement began in April 1790, and its first results were manifest in Toulouse. "By invoking the name of God, by stolen oaths taken in the Churches themselves, . . . by processions, pilgrimages and anonymous addresses" the people were worked up to a tumult, which was only saved from becoming an insurrection by the tact of the town authorities.²

Tidings of the tumult at Toulouse reached the *émigrés* assembled at Turin, who at once took measures to foster the spirit of revolt. They concocted a plan by which Lyons should become a rallying point for the disaffected, and a centre to which help could be sent from abroad. But this plan also failed, for the *émigrés* had not sufficient

¹ Daudet, E., *Coblentz*, 1789-1793, p. 18.

² Lameth, Alex. de *Histoire de, l'assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 200 seq.

influence in France to do great harm there. They were thus thrown back upon foreign aid.

For a time the princes had but small success with the powers of Europe. The state of European politics just then was such that, unless Austria moved no other power could effectually aid the cause of the old regime. But for years the Emperor had cared little to maintain that alliance with France which his mother had brought about with such trouble and such pride. He sought Catherine of Russia rather than Louis of France. Catherine had designs on the Ottoman Empire and in her designs Joseph wished to share. He had other things to do than to fight the Revolution, and it therefore suited his policy to assume that Louis was sincere in every token he gave of adherence to the new order of things. "The King," wrote Joseph II. as early as October 1789, in reply to a letter from the Comte d'Artois, "has made no complaint; on the contrary, he and the nation agree on all that has been done; what right then has a third person to interfere between a united king and a nation legally represented by its deputies."¹ Neither Catherine of Russia nor Joseph of Austria wished to have their forces or their treasures drained by a war with France. On the 20th of February 1790, Joseph died,

¹ *Correspondance entre le comte de Mercy-Argenteau et l'empereur*, vol. ii. p. 277.

and was succeeded by his brother Leopold, Grand-Duke of Tuscany. Leopold adopted his brother's policy towards France, but he adopted it with a colder heart than Joseph had done, for he had not the affection for Marie-Antoinette which the elder brother had always entertained. "I have a sister in France," wrote Leopold, "but France is not my sister."¹

Nor were the other powers much more willing. Spain and Sardinia were too poor to afford men or money. Belgium was in revolt against Austria and in sympathy with the Revolution. The King of Prussia hoped for an Austrian alliance and would not move without the Emperor. England was determined on neutrality.

Alone of all the sovereigns, Gustave III., the chivalrous king of Sweden, was heart and soul with the princes. France had long been an ally of Sweden; Gustave indeed owed his throne to a revolution largely brought about by the diplomacy of Louis XV.

With his whole heart Gustave responded to the friendship of France, but his sympathies were entirely with the France of the old regime. He looked on the Revolution as a monstrous giant ready to arise and slay the France of his love, and on himself as her deliverer. "The Revolution was

¹ Forneron, H., *Histoire générale des émigrés*, p. 278.

for him only a brilliant opportunity for the display of his military genius and chivalrous intervention.”¹ “I wish,” he said, “to show other kings an example of respect to a comrade in misfortune.”²

The autumn of 1790 gave Gustave an opportunity of showing his sincerity. In October of this year the National Assembly decreed that the tri-colour flag, not yet adopted by the navy, should henceforth fly on the French fleet, and that instead of the old cry, “*Vive le roi !*” the sailors should shout “*Vivent la nation, la loi, et le roi !*” and it sent a notice of the change to all foreign courts.³ At this Gustave tried to persuade Russia and Denmark to join him in a northern league which should refuse to acknowledge any French flag but the old one, and he despatched his minister Stedingk to propose this league to Catherine. “Louis is an excellent man,” Catherine replied, “but how feeble ! How is it possible to help one who does not wish to be helped ? It is he himself who requires us to recognise the flag,”⁴ and with this reply the scheme of a northern league vanished.

Deserted by Russia and looked at askance by Vienna, Gustave and the *émigrés* were powerless to

¹ Geffroy, A., *Instructions aux ambassadeurs de France*, Suède introd. p. ci.

² Geffroy, A., *Gustave III. et la cour de France*, vol. ii. p. 109.

³ *Décret du 21 octobre 1790.*

⁴ Geffroy, A., *Gustave III. et la cour de France*, vol. ii. p. 131.

excite any great movement in Europe. They were not, however, powerless for evil. Neither Louis nor Marie-Antoinette, however much they might hope for the intervention of the powers, desired that intervention at the hands of the princes ; as long as possible they wished to keep up the appearance of union with the Assembly. But the princes persisted in presenting Louis and Marie-Antoinette to the eyes of Europe as suffering royalty coerced by the will of its subjects, and by so doing destroyed, so far as in them lay, what credit the unfortunate sovereigns had obtained by the incidents of February 4th and July 14th. No remonstrance from the Tuileries had any effect, and the determination of the princes to save the Monarchy in their own way, their obstinate disregard of advice, their independent, ill-advised action rendered their policy a source of grave danger to the Crown.

Truly the difficulties of the King of the French were great. Bound by oath to an Assembly he mistrusted, urged by Mirabeau to adopt a policy which involved the risk of the evil he most dreaded, held up to Europe as a puppet by his brothers, there is little wonder that he obeyed the instinct of race and of tradition, and spite of advice, spite of luke-warmness, himself sought help from his fellow-sovereigns.

Louis' scheme differed from that of the princes,

and on this he laid great stress. He proposed to fly secretly from Paris and go to a frontier town within reach of foreign help. There he would summon to his side those troops and subjects who still remained faithful to his ideas of sovereignty. He would then declare his intentions to his people, offering them a Constitution based on the Declaration made at the *séance royale* of June 1789 ; that is to say, he would offer them periodical meetings of the States-General and the right to vote taxes, but he would restore the three Orders, tithes, and feudal rights. If this were refused he would appeal to Austria, who would, he hoped, consult with the European powers and threaten, if need be, armed interference. But he did not propose to leave France, nor did he wish to see a foreign army invade his kingdom : least of all did he wish the *émigrés* to identify themselves with the powers.¹

In November 1790 Louis invested his old minister, Breteuil, with power to treat on his behalf at the foreign courts and at the same time sent the sketch of a plan for secret flight from Paris to Bouillé then in command of the troops, lying near the German frontier. By December definite preparations for flight had begun.²

¹ Cf. Bourgoing, *Histoire diplomatique*, vol. i. p. 226, and Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii. p. 135 *seq.*

² Fournel, V., *L'événement de Varennes*, pp. 44 and 50. *Mémoires du comte Louis*.

Meantime Mirabeau, from whom Breteuil's mission was kept secret, was working hard for the king and queen. In December he drew up his longest and most elaborate note for the court. In this he held out the hope of "an improved Constitution as the one object which prudence, honour and the real interest of the king, as inseparable from that of the nation, rendered admissible."¹ He wished to see the present Assembly dissolved and a new one, which must not meet at Paris, elected. He wished so to influence public opinion and electoral assemblies that the electors would themselves demand the revision of certain articles in the Constitution, and to this end he planned elaborate schemes by which the constituencies were to be educated by books and pamphlets scattered broadcast, and by agents sent to the provinces with written instructions furnished by the Crown. He wished for a closer union between the Assembly and the ministers, and a ministry which would be at once, as acceptable to the people as it was devoted to the royal authority. Lastly, he would have had the king and queen appear constantly in public, visit hospitals, be present at reviews of the National Guard, and even attend the sittings of the Assembly.² Mirabeau did not

¹ Bacourt, *Correspondance*, etc., vol. ii. p. 417 seq. *Quarante-septième note pour la cour.*

² *Id.*

minimise the dangers to which royalty and France were exposed. He recognised a growing spirit of ferocity in the people, and a growing hatred against the royal family. He recognised the increase of disorder and of division in the land, but his one hope was in constitutional reform, supported by the Crown.

For a moment it seemed as if Mirabeau's advice were at last to take effect. The queen was touched by the passionate appeal made by the great statesman, and induced her husband to sanction the suggestions he had made. Arrangements were even begun by which they could be carried out.¹

But the old irresolution, the old inability to grasp a situation on the part of the king again prevailed. "When one talks to him of the state of his affairs," said la Marck "it is as if one were talking of the affairs of the kingdom of China,"² and Marie-Antoinette, never really in sympathy with Mirabeau's idea, was paralysed by her husband's inertia. A few weeks later the great Mirabeau lay dead, the warning voice was silent. "With him," says Mr. Morse Stephens, "died the cause of the monarchy of the Bourbons, and the only hope of a peaceful solution of the dangers and difficulties threatening

¹ Bacourt, see *Correspondance entre Mirabeau et la Marck*, in vol. iii.

² Bacourt, *Correspondance*, vol. iii. p. 30, *La Marck à Mercy*.

France.”¹ The queen, who mistrusted him, as she did every statesman who believed in a Constitutional monarchy, was relieved by his death, but Louis, with an intuition that almost makes one fancy “the divine spark” had at last descended, remarked, “Do not rejoice over the death of Mirabeau, we have suffered a greater loss than you imagine.”²

The remark was more true than the king could have himself realised. More emphatically, more openly than any constitutionalist, Mirabeau had maintained the necessity of establishing the royal authority on a firm basis, and of giving it due independence. Everyone knew this, and yet when the great orator lay dying the people constituted themselves guards at either end of the Rue de la Chaussée d’Antin and allowed no wheeled vehicle to pass, and when news of his death was announced they cried out with mournful voices “He is dead, he is dead.”³ To do him honour the Department of Paris suggested, and the National Assembly voted, that the great new church of Sainte-Geneviève rising on the south of the Seine should be set apart to receive the remains of the great Frenchmen who had best served their country. It was when Mirabeau died that the words were engraved with which all who know the

¹ Stephens, H. M., *History of the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. 430.

² Tourzel, Mme. de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 247.

³ *Histoire de la Révolution française par deux amis*, vol. vi. p. 40.

Panthéon are so familiar :—“*Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante.*” If he, in spite of monarchical principles, had gained such a hold on his fellow-countrymen, who can say what his loss meant to the Crown? “I take with me,” he himself said, “the weeds of the Monarchy ; after my death the different parties will quarrel over her rags.”¹ As yet few imagined that very soon there would not even be rags to quarrel over.

¹ *Histoire de la Révolution française par deux amis*, vol. vi. p. 49.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECOND YEAR OF LIBERTY.



MEDAL STRUCK IN 1791.

IF one reflects for a moment on what France had accomplished in a single year, one cannot wonder at the exaggerated sense of achievement to which the *Fête de la Fédération* gave so brilliant an expression. In a year France had reconstituted her government, her church,

her courts of justice and her municipalities. She had created an electoral system, had abolished privilege, feudal rights, and *lettres de cachet*, and had removed religious disabilities ; she had swept away old land-marks and set up new boundaries, had instituted liberty of the press, juries in criminal courts, and a new fiscal system ; she had adopted

new national colours, and even given her king a new title.

But with the *Fête de la Fédération* the first glory of the Revolution passed away. Liberty was secure ; but "liberty," as Necker said in March 1790, "is not our only aim, order and steady government, revenues established on a satisfactory basis, are also necessary for the prosperity of a nation."¹

These things had not yet been attained. Liberty had been won too quickly, too easily, to carry with it either order, steady government, or satisfactory finance. In the second year of liberty France had time to realise the sources of division which lay hidden under the great measures achieved in the first. She knew they were there, and had hoped that the *fête* of July by magic touch would heal them. But the magic and the *fête* faded together, while the divisions remained, and grew apace.

The high hopes of July received a first rude shock from a rebellion which broke out in August in the three regiments—the Château-vieux, Swiss, and the *régiment du roi* and *mestre du camp*, French troops—then in garrison at Nancy. The spirit of insubordination abroad among the troops was fostered by clubs which had sprung up in most regiments—clubs at which soldiers and non-com-

¹ *Arch. parl.*, vol. xii. p. 57, *Mémoire sur les finances*.

missioned officers "having dwelt with effusion on their own rights proceeded to question those of their superiors." ¹

On August 2nd a breach of discipline occurred in the *régiment du roi*, and on the 6th the National Assembly put down all military clubs whatsoever. At the same time it enjoined just behaviour on the part of the officers, and appointed inspectors to examine into the regimental accounts and the pay due to the men.²

A fortnight later, on August 23rd, M. de Malseigne, one of the new inspectors, arrived at Nancy and began his work with the accounts of the Château-vieux. Presently a difference arose; it was followed by an insult to the inspector, an attempt to take him prisoner, and, a few days later by his escape from the town. The Swiss, angry and excited by a rumour that the Austrians and the English were on the frontiers and that Malseigne was among them, followed him to Lunéville, where a detachment of Carabineers under his orders, charged and dispersed the pursuers, killing several of their number. At this the whole garrison rushed to arms to avenge the death of their comrades. The lower classes in Nancy sided with the soldiers,

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la Terreur*, vol. i. p. 53. See also, though too favourable to insurgents, *Révolutions de Paris*, Prudhomme, Nos. 60 seq.

² *Décret du 6 août 1790.*

and for some days both town and garrison were in open revolt.

The Marquis de Bouillé, commander of the military district in which Nancy lay, acting on instructions from the National Assembly thereupon advanced to Nancy, and by the afternoon of August 31st was at its gates. He demanded the instant release of Malseigne and of the commandant Denoue, held prisoners by the men, and the immediate evacuation of the town by the offending garrison. The French regiments obeyed, but the Swiss, backed by the mob, took up their post at one of the city gates, and when summoned to surrender fired on the Metz National Guard which acted as advance-guard of Bouillé's troops. Bouillé's men returned the fire. The gate was stormed and a furious fight began, which lasted for three hours. At seven o'clock the insurgents laid down their arms and asked for peace; the Château-vieux were almost all killed, wounded or taken prisoners. But forty officers and four hundred among Bouillé's troops had fallen, and the punishment which followed the rebellion was severe. A court-martial was held, nine of the ring-leaders were shot and forty sent to the galleys for thirty years.¹ Of these forty we shall hear again.

No sooner was order restored at Nancy than the

¹See *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xviii. p. 524. Letter from Bouillé to the Assembly, and Mortimer-Ternaux, vol. i. p. 57.

spirit of revolt broke out in the navy. On August 21st the Assembly had voted a decree determining the punishments to be awarded for offences in the navy. The new code was supposed to be more in consonance with the Rights of Man than the regulations of the old regime, but the sailors were dissatisfied. Freedom they said had been promised, and instead of freedom a code was imposed on them fit only for negroes, and leaving their ships, fifteen hundred of the men took their complaints to the municipality of Brest, refusing to work until the law was altered. The Assembly remained firm, but it sent commissioners to Brest, and on their recommendation modified one or two of the regulations. It also decreed the use of the tri-coloured flag,¹ and by the end of October quiet was restored. But "the spirit of sedition which," says Lord Gower, English Ambassador at Paris, "clogs the wheels of the government in every part of France,"² had received but too ample illustration in this autumn of 1790.

And while the spirit of sedition was rife among the forces, a sense of lawlessness continued to pervade the people. This unfortunately was increased by the reforms which the Assembly was then making in the administration of justice. These reforms were based on theory and left custom, precedent

¹ See pp. 146 and 274.

² Browning, O., *Despatches of Lord Gower*, p. 33.

and experience out of account. Trial by jury, for example, instituted in criminal courts by a decree of April 1790, was entirely foreign to old French methods; and the men called upon to serve on the juries were as unaccustomed to weigh evidence as the judges were to guide them to a correct verdict. For the old judge-ships were themselves swept away. Judges could no longer buy or inherit their posts, or hold them undisturbed for life; appointments were made by popular election for a term of six years, and the only qualifications necessary were those of having been a judge or having practised law in court for five, and of being thirty years of age. So obvious were the defects of such a system that an assessor, appointed for life by the king, was provided for each court.¹

And not only were the laws sweeping in character but the Assembly was precipitate in introducing them. A change which replaced one system by another could not be effected without great interruption in the work of the courts, and consequent delay of justice. It took time for men to accustom themselves to new tribunals, and it was long before these assumed the authority of the old; it took time also for the judges, advocates and procurators to learn the new forms, and yet the Assembly abolished the old Courts of Justice before the new were ready

¹ *Décrets du 30 avril et du 16 août 1790, sur les jurés et l'organisation du pouvoir judiciaire.*

for work. In February 1790 it had suspended the parlements, but had allowed their *chambres de vacation* to dispense justice until the inauguration of the new system. That time was hardly come when it ordered the total suppression of the parlements, and on the 30th of September every Palais de Justice in France, except that of Paris, was closed. A fortnight later, on October 15th, the building that had controlled every organisation in the capital, that had seen the registration of every edict published in France, in which parlements had defied kings, and kings had over-borne the strongest in the land, was closed at the bidding and in the presence of a popularly-elected Mayor of Paris. Truly times had changed !

So much for order and steady government ; nor was the state of finance any better.

On the 21st of July 1790 Necker, at the request of the National Assembly, sent in a statement of accounts for the year beginning May 1st, 1789, and ending April 30th, 1790. He sent it with a protest against the short time allowed in which to prepare it, and with many assurances of fidelity. But it was not a pleasant report to present. Out of over eight hundred millions of revenue, only about three hundred and fifty came from taxation. The rest was made up of anticipations of the revenue of the coming year, of advances by the *Caisse d'Es-*

compte, of money subscribed to the loans of 1789 and of patriotic contributions. His report showed that the normal expenses of the year had exceeded the normal receipts by one hundred and sixty millions of livres; that is to say, in the year that had passed since the opening of the States-General the deficit had trebled.¹

For this neither Necker nor the National Assembly was altogether to blame. Fresh expenses had been heavy and the raising of taxes exceedingly difficult partly because the municipalities in their first pride of popularity did not always support the tax collectors. Necker, however, *was* blamed. His report was received in silence and sent to the *comité des finances* for examination. He was accused of never furnishing documents, and of leaving the nation in doubt as to the real amount of the debt. "What," exclaimed the Abbé Maury, "would England think if William Pitt maintained as great reticence and obscurity in his budget?"² To meet the difficulties of the moment the *comité des finances* proposed advances by the *Caisse d'Escompte* amounting to 80 million francs for August and September and proposed also a fresh issue of assignats. To

¹ *Archives parl.*, vol. xvii. p. 249 *seq.*; also Gomel, C., *Histoire financière de l'assemblée constituante*, vol. i. p. 231 *seq.*, and the excellent chapters on Finance in the Cambridge *History of the French Revolution*.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xvii. p. 326.

DOMAINES NATIONAUX

Hypothèques au remboursement des Assignats décrétés par l'Assemblée Nationale,

Les 19 & 21 Décembre 1789, 10 Mars 1790, 10 Avril 1790, sanctionnés par L'É. R. O.

ASSIGNAT DE

Mille livres.



IL sera payé, à l'ordre du sieur

MILLE LIVRES, à la Caisse de l'Extraordinaire, conformément aux dispositions du Décret des seize & dix-sept Avril 1790, de cent quatre-vingt-dix.

Millon

Le sieur de



Millon

N.º 22306.

INTÉRÊT par jour, VINGT DENIERS.

this fresh issue Necker objected, and because he objected Mirabeau and others urged the proposal the more, hoping thereby to force his resignation.

At the same time the action of the government in the affair of Nancy had rendered the ministers unpopular, and a Paris mob on September 2nd collected in the gardens of the Tuileries, crying "*à bas les ministres, à mort Bouillé.*" Beset alike by the Assembly and the populace, Necker lost courage, and on September 3rd wrote to the President of the Assembly intimating his resignation.¹ The letter was listened to with indifference, and Necker, who, little more than a year before, had been welcomed back to Paris as if he were a god, now left without any expression of regret. "His resignation," said Lord Gower, "has pleased all parties."² "History," says M. Gomel, "offers few examples of a fall so complete."³

And yet it was not altogether strange. Necker had never enjoyed the full confidence of the Assembly, for he had disappointed the Third Estate from the very first, and he was no longer a symbol to the people, who had transferred their allegiance from the popular minister to popular clubs.

¹ See letter in *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xviii. p. 559.

² Browning, O., *Despatches of Lord Gower*, p. 31.

³ Gomel, C., *Histoire financière*, vol. ii. p. 254.

His resignation left the Assembly free to pursue its own policy in finance. What that policy was, it is impossible here to explain, but it had two marked characteristics—renewed issues of *assignats* and constant attempts to increase the property it could call national. By the first, the Assembly reduced the value of the *assignats* and raised the price of gold and silver, making actual coin more and more scarce.¹ It therefore impoverished the people, who could not obtain coin and were obliged to accept notes for which they did not receive full value. At the same time, the renewed issues of *assignats* lowered the value of the national domains on whose sale the Assembly depended for the payment of the deficit. For the Assembly, anxious to pay off the debt as soon as possible, and having, by *assignats*, given the public the means of buying national property, offered too large a proportion of this at once, thereby producing a glut in the market, and lowering its price. In short, it killed the goose that laid the golden eggs.

In the second place, as national property was

¹ See *Décret du 29 septembre 1790* for conditions of second issue. It limited the *assignats* in circulation to 1200 million livres, declared the number issued would never exceed the value of the national property, and it promised that the *assignats* returned to the *Caisse de l'extraordinaire* would be burned. These conditions were not kept, and a decree of October 8th abolished the interest borne by the first issue of *assignats* and thus made them into ordinary money.

the last resource upon which the State could rely, the Assembly became more and more anxious to increase that resource. Thus, while on the one hand it impoverished the people by its frequent issues of paper money, on the other it impoverished many a noble family, by claiming as national property land alienated from the crown "without consent of the people" years and years before, and held as private property ever since. It looked also with a covetous eye on the goods of *émigrés*, and many a man found his goods confiscated as an *émigré* who was only a non-resident in his parish. Finally, the Assembly added to religious bitterness and strife by setting its seal on church treasure not absolutely necessary to public worship, by closing more and more monasteries, and by a growing spirit of economy in its treatment of the *religieux* pensioned by the State. By these methods, in spite of all its efforts and all its good intentions, the Constituent Assembly stirred up strife in the land, impoverished the people, hampered commerce, and steadily added to the national debt.¹

Disquieting as these things were, they were as nothing compared to the divisions brought about by the famous decree of July 12th on the

¹ See Mallet du Pan, quoted by Gomel, Ch., *Histoire financière de l'assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 571.

civil constitution of the clergy. No change wrought in the old regime was so painful to Louis XVI. as this. A faithful son of the church he grieved over the decree as a man and a Christian, and cared little for the loss of prestige which it caused him as a sovereign. Yet the loss was great. The king could no longer appoint to the benefices or regulate the affairs of the church; he was reduced to being its mere nominal head, subject to the will of the people.

He could, of course, refuse to sanction the decree, but two days after it was voted Louis had promised "to maintain the Constitution decreed by the Assembly," and if the oath added the proviso "and accepted by the king," the men who heard it, emphasised the first clause and dwelt lightly on the second. Louis was sorely perplexed. On July 16th the Pope had written to him sympathising with his difficulties, but warning him that, if he sanctioned the decree, he would draw the whole nation into error, render France schismatic, and very probably involve her in civil war. The Pope, however, did not formally condemn the civil constitution of the clergy, and Louis' one hope was that he would not. The king therefore wrote to the Holy See protesting his loyalty and submitting for its consideration certain points on which concessions might be made, but

before the College of Cardinals gave their decision, the Most Christian King, hardly pressed by his own advisers, had sanctioned the law which henceforward made the See of Rome a mere phantom of authority to the Church of France.¹

The decree was sanctioned at the end of August, but it was not easily put into execution. The prelates were firmer than the king. The Bishops of Lyons and of Beauvais quietly disregarded the new arrangements, those of Lisieux and of Dijon refused to do anything until the Pope had spoken. The Bishop of Tréguier in Brittany declined to recognise the bishops or *curés* appointed according to the new rules. Chapters, *curés*, vicars protested; priests preached against the Assembly, and even condemned as guilty of mortal sin those who acquired church property; one *curé* is said to have incited his parishioners to refuse to pay the taxes and even to murder the tax-gatherers, offering himself as leader in these saintly deeds.²

In striking contrast to such suggestions was the document drawn up on October 30th by the bishops who were deputies to the National Assembly. In it they examined point by point the changes brought about by the decree of July

¹ See Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. i. p. 286 seq.

² *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxi. p. 3, *Rapport des comités réunis, des rapports, et ecclésiastique, sur les protestations des divers évêques et chapitres, etc.*

12th, and showed wherein these were opposed to the authorities acknowledged by the Catholic Church. The *Exposition* was a noble and moderate statement, and concluded with the expression of an earnest wish to avoid schism and a resolve to take no further action until a deliverance was given by the Holy See.¹

All, as we have seen, were not so moderate, and the National Assembly resolved to enforce the law and put down opposition with a strong hand. On the 27th of November it decided that every clergyman holding public office must take the oath within one week of the date of publication of the decree, if in his parish; within one month, if absent in another part of France; within two months if out of the country; or be held as having resigned his office.² Further, any priest who, having refused the oath, insisted on continuing his public functions, who joined with others in opposing a decree sanctioned by the king, or who hindered its execution, would lose his pension and be deprived of civil rights as a disturber of the peace. The clergy, the king, and the Pope, who had not yet spoken, had hoped that somehow an open schism might be prevented, but to all such hopes this decree

¹ B. M. P., *Clergé*, R. 353, *Exposition des principes sur la constitution du clergé*.

² *Décret du 27 novembre, 1790, sur le serment à prêter par tout ecclésiastique fonctionnaire public.*

was the knell. Again the king hesitated to give his sanction. But while he hesitated a disturbance arose in Paris and Louis was told that the faubourgs were in danger of rising, "I care not," he replied, "whether they take my life or not, I am tired of it." "Sire," was the answer that touched the keenest sensibilities the king possessed, "it is not your life, but the lives of the clergy that are in danger." Louis yielded and on December 26th sanctioned the new decree.¹

Next day the Abbé Grégoire and sixty-five priests took the oath; on the 28th Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, and on the 2nd of January, Gobel, a suffragan bishop, and forty priests followed their example; in all, about one hundred out of three hundred clerical deputies had by January 3rd conformed to the decrees. These were fewer than the progressive party in the Assembly had hoped for, and the 4th of January,—the last of the eight days of grace for those clergy who were deputies of the Assembly—opened with no little anxiety. On the evening before, bills had been posted throughout the city declaring that all priests who refused next day to take the oath would be considered disturbers of the peace and prosecuted as such. It was an unauthorised lie but it excited the people, and on the morning of the fourth the galleries and surroundings

¹ Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. i. 340.

of the Salle du Manège were crowded with an excited populace. "Every one," says a contemporary, "was on the tip-toe of expectation, the faithful watched with intense anxiety lest their bishops and pastors should fail them. But no, the bishops, many of them bent by the weight of years and the cares of office, hurried forward to the fatal desk, followed by their faithful clergy, and there bore witness to the faith as it is in Christ."¹

"Ou le serment, ou l'indigence, mon cœur pourrais-tu balancer ?

Adieu, pour toujours l'opulence, de toi je saurai me passer,
La barque sans être dorée, arrive-t-elle moins au port
Par le revers, l'âme épurée, vole au ciel avec moins d'effort."²

Not one bishop that day took the oath. The first called was the Bishop of Agen. "I do not," he said, "regret my position or my fortune, but I should deeply deplore the loss of your esteem. I hope I retain it in signifying my regret that I cannot take the oath you have decreed."³ One by one priests and bishops spoke in the same sense, until at length the sympathies of the spectators were turning to the clergy. It was therefore decided to ask the clergy to take the oath as a body. The Assembly waited in profound silence for a quarter of an hour, and not a single

¹ B. M. P., *Clergé*, F.R. 161, *Histoire du serment*.

² B. M. P., *L'église constitutionnelle*, R. 353.

³ Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. ii. p. 11.

man rose. Then M. de Saint-Aulaire, Bishop of Poitiers, tried to make himself heard:—"I am seventy years old, thirty-five of these years I have spent in an Episcopate during which I have done all the good that was in my power—I will not dishonour my old age. I will not take an oath which——"¹ Old man as he was, the end of the sentence was drowned by the tumult of the *tribunes*.

The 4th of January was a triumph for the clergy. On the following Sunday the oath was to be taken in the churches by the parish *curés*, after the early or parochial mass, in presence of the faithful and of municipal commissioners. But the result was different. The *curés*, as we have seen, were more in sympathy with the Revolution than were the upper clergy, and those who took the oath in Paris were about equal in number to those who refused it. Many, however, added to their oath a reservation regarding the civil constitution of the clergy.²

One must not too readily condemn the clergy who conformed. At the time of the Revolution, the church of France, and especially its prelacy, was, with many a noble exception, too self-indulgent and apathetic. L'Abbé Grégoire complains that the old bishops had grown very careless, that in many

¹ Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. ii. p. 3 *seq.*

² See Archives nationales, D. xix. 44, for details regarding the taking of the oath in different parishes in Paris.

parishes a bishop had never been seen, and that the rite of confirmation had been sadly neglected.¹ "May the new life of the church be pure. May it be worthy of that God whom we all revere, and whose image, alas! the old church did not blush to destroy," was the wish, evidently sincere, expressed by a popular club in December 1790.²

For a time things went on fairly quietly. The Assembly made it clear that no man could be prosecuted for refusing to take the oath, he simply became a priest without a benefice, and as such the non-juring priests were allowed to say mass at side altars in the parish churches. The Assembly was careful also to explain that the civil constitution did not touch the question of orthodoxy or dogma, but dealt only with matters within the competency of the State.³ This was to beg the whole question, but the care taken by the Assembly to emphasise this shows how solicitous it was to reassure the people.

But in April 1791 a new aspect was given to the problem by a Brief dated on the 13th of that month by which the Pope expressly condemned the civil constitution of the clergy, interdicted those clergy

¹ Grégoire, l'Abbé, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 24.

² B. M. P., *Clubs et sociétés populaires*, R. 157, *Société fraternelle* 8 déc. 1790.

³ See Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. ii. p. 134 seq. on *L'instruction du 21 janvier 1791*.

who had conformed, declared the Sacraments administered by them without effect, all couples united by them not married, the dying absolved by them unabsolved ;¹ and yet the Most Christian King, the faithful son of the church, had sanctioned the decrees that the Pope condemned.

Thus it was that this second year of liberty saw the rift between the king and the Constitution, in spite of his oath, and in spite of the effort of Mirabeau, widen past recovery. One by one Louis had been shorn of his prerogatives. The Assembly had removed from him all legislative and judicial powers. It had deprived him of church patronage, of the right of deciding on peace or war ; it had voted the numbers of his army, and had left him no choice in the appointment of judges, and it had forced his conscience. From the day that Louis sanctioned the decree on the civil constitution of the clergy, he ceased in his own mind to keep up the fiction of being at one with the National Assembly, and acted instead on the theory thrust upon Europe by the princes—the theory that he was no longer a free agent. On this assumption he did what he was asked to do, talked of “that reciprocity of sentiment between the Assembly and himself which is the only means of calming agitation and over-

¹ See Bourgoing, F. de, *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe pendant la révolution française*.

coming the law," and plotted to leave Paris and renounce the Constitution.

"The king," says M. Aulard, after summing up the weaknesses in Louis' character, "possessed one solid sentiment which did not change, the feeling for religion, and it was his remorse for the commission of what he considered well-nigh a mortal sin, which changed the vacillation of his character into deliberate double dealing. To this man, born upright, every means became good which might enable him to become again in very truth the 'Most Christian King,' and might soothe his conscience by reconciling France with the Holy See."¹

¹ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique de la révolution française*, p. 116.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EASTER, 1791.



PIUS VI.

NOW this Spring of 1791 which saw the king plotting to escape from the capital saw a change in the fortunes of the *émigrés*. At the end of the year 1790 the Comte d'Artois had left his father-in-law's court at Turin and by permission of his uncle the Prince Elector

of Trèves had settled at Coblenz;¹ a little earlier the Prince de Condé formed a camp at Worms. Here at length was something definite—a formal gathering of the *émigrés* in martial array on the borders of France. “When the Elector of Trèves,” says Lameth, “allowed the fugitives to settle on the Rhine they first assumed political importance.”²

¹ Daudet, E., *Coblenz*, p. 83.

² Lameth, A. de, *Histoire de l'Assemblée constituante*, vol. ii. p. 103.

The importance thus obtained was the greater because of a quarrel which had arisen between the National Assembly and the German princes under allegiance to Austria, but holding possessions in Alsace. For over two hundred years France and Austria had wrangled over Alsace, and at length in 1648 sought to settle their differences by the Treaty of Westphalia. That Treaty confirmed France in the sovereignty of Alsace, but it made certain reservations in favour of "the princes, clergy, nobles, towns and people of the province."¹ The Revolution, however, rode roughshod over all particular rights and privileges, and treated Alsace as a part of France and nothing more. In January 1790 the province became the two departments of Haut and Bas-Rhin; in March the feudal rights of the German princes were abolished in common with those of all France,² and in October the claim of her clergy to exemption from the decrees regarding the Church was expressly disallowed.³ The German princes protested, but the National Assembly replied that kings could only confirm rights so long as they were the depositaries of the sovereignty of the

¹ See B. M. P., *Émigrés*, R. 243, *Protestation des officiers du Conseil souverain d'Alsace*, 10 oct. 1790.

² Although feudal rights were really abolished on August 4th 1789, the detailed decree concerning them was not passed until March 15th 1790.

³ *Décret du 17 octobre 1790.*

nation, and that the nation having resumed its powers and having decided to abolish all particular rights, Alsace had no claim whatever. But Mirabeau, on the ground of the long-standing friendship between France and the German princes holding possessions in Alsace, persuaded the Assembly to entertain the question of indemnity.¹ On this question the opposing parties held different views. The German princes, no longer friendly, appealed to the imperial Diet, and although no admirers of the *émigrés*, yet proved a source of strength to their cause, inasmuch as the quarrel over the rights of Alsace might at any time provide the occasion of war with France.

At the same time the Revolution had irritated Austria by fostering the rebellion against the Emperor in his Belgian territories, while Prussia, whose subjects were somewhat inflamed by the doings in France, grew uneasy at the progress of new ideas, and in the autumn of 1790 made overtures to Vienna. She was willing, she said, to forget her long-standing quarrel with the Hapsburgs and in the interest of Europe co-operate with Austria in resisting the encroachments of the Revolution.²

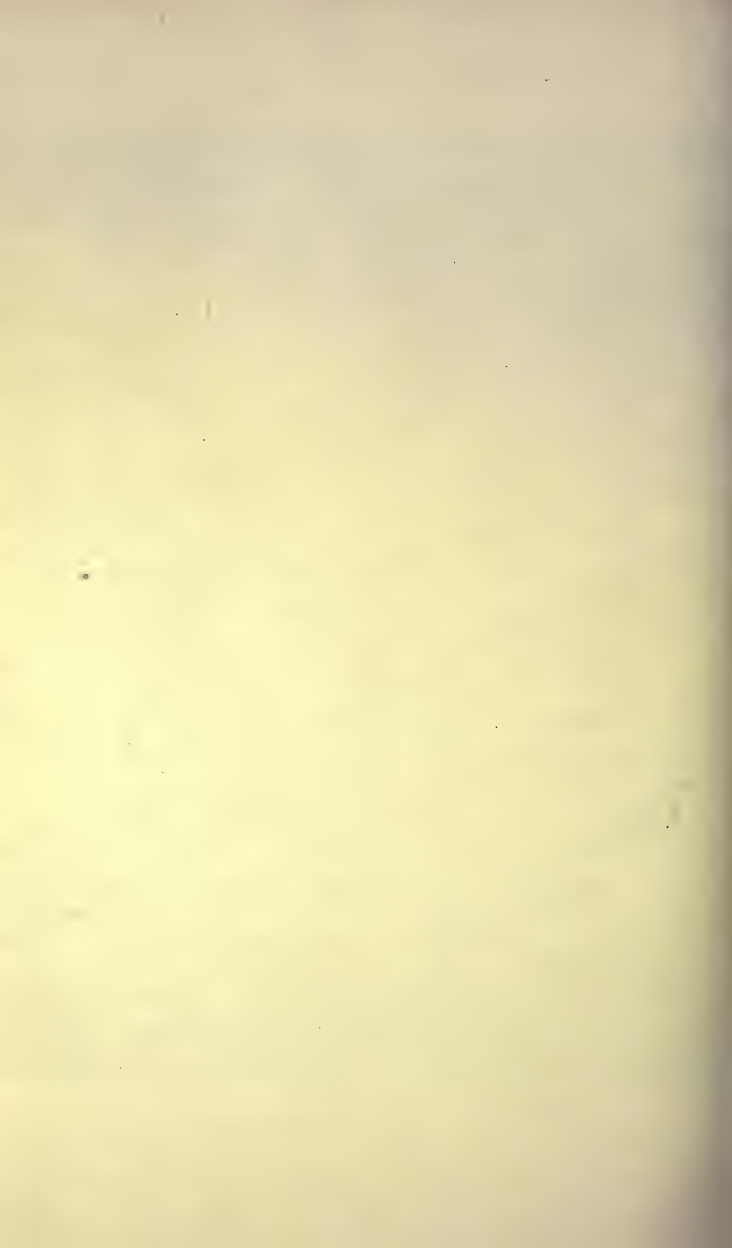
¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xi. p. 547 and *Décret du 20 avril 1790 au sujet des indemnités prétendues par les propriétaires de fiefs en Alsace*.

² See on foreign relations with France, Sorel, A., *l'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii. p. 144 *seq.*

France therefore saw her eastern frontier hemmed in by a line of unfriendly powers among whom dwelt the *émigrés*, waiting and hoping for an opportunity to restore the old regime to their native land. In these circumstances it was only natural that the revolutionary leaders and people of Paris should regard with extreme jealousy any hint of negotiations between the French court and Austria or the *émigrés*.

In the month of February 1791 several incidents occurred in Paris which added to the suspicion with which all royal movements were now watched. On February 18th Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire, daughters of Louis XV., devout Catholics and alarmed for their own salvation, fled from the godless city which had forsworn Rome; next day rumours were afloat that Monsieur, a much more important personage, was about to follow their example. It was after this that the Municipality of Paris sent to the Assembly and begged it to vote a decree which should compel the princes of the reigning house to remain in France on pain of having their names removed from the civil list.

A little later Paris was again alarmed. Lying to the south of the city was the old Château of Vincennes. It had been used as a State prison, and between it and the Tuileries subterranean passages



were supposed to exist. A rumour got abroad that repairs then being made in the castle were but a preparation for the flight of the king, who meant to escape from the Tuileries by the underground passage, and having gained Vincennes fly to the frontier. This rumour once set a-foot, it was easy to persuade the miserable wandering population which took refuge in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine to go to Vincennes and prevent any such design by destroying the fortress, and on February 28th a band of these men went willingly enough to the work of destruction. The National Guard was called out, and Lafayette, hurrying to the scene of action, stopped the "brigands," brought back the ring-leaders to the capital and lodged them in the Conciergerie.¹

Meantime news of the riot reached the Tuileries and the king's apartments were suddenly and somewhat unaccountably filled by a number of Royalists, who disregarding the National Guard on duty at the palace, insisted that they had come to secure the safety of the king.² By eight o'clock in the evening nothing had happened and the royalist gentlemen began to leave the palace. Their conduct, however, had excited the suspicion of the National Guard,

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 86, and *Mémoires de Lafayette*, vol. iii. p. 162.

² *Correspondance de Mme. Elisabeth, Lettre à Madame de Bombelles, du 2 mars 1791.*

who asked that the Royalists might be searched before they left, so as to see whether or no they were contravening orders and carrying arms into the palace. The Royalists refused, but Louis, anxious to prevent a fray, asked them to submit, and several baskets were filled with the daggers and pistols they laid down. Just then Lafayette arrived at the Tuileries. Convinced in his own mind that the riot at Vincennes was a royalist ruse to get him out of the way, and afford a pretext and opportunity for the flight of the king, he harangued the self-constituted protectors, thanked the National Guard and assured them that henceforth no one should have an opportunity of standing between their sovereign and themselves. "A Constitutional king," he declared, "cannot, and indeed does not, wish to be surrounded by any save the soldiers of liberty."¹

A month later,—and partly because of this episode of the "poignards,"—the Assembly, discussing the question of the residence of public servants, decided that so long as its session lasted, the king must not leave Paris; and that if at any time he went farther than twenty leagues away, he might be asked to return, and if he did not come back within three months he would forfeit his position as "first

¹ Tourzel, Mme. de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 253. Lafayette, *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 54.

public functionary," in other words, lose his crown. The king's relations with the Assembly were, to say the least, strained.

Now the point which above all caused Louis' sincerity to the Constitution to be questioned was that of the civil constitution of the clergy. He had hesitated to sanction the decree, he was known to dislike any clergyman who had taken the civil oath, and he attended mass only in the chapel of the Louvre, where the clergy, being of his own household, were non-jurors.

It is, however, a custom of the Romish Church that every faithful adherent must communicate on Easter day in his parish church. But if the king did so, he must receive the Sacrament at the hands of a constitutional priest. If he did not he laid himself open to the charge of intentional disrespect to the Constitution. Here then was a test by which Paris and the leaders of the Revolution might prove the sincerity of the king.

To avoid the dilemma the king and queen made arrangements to pass Easter at Saint-Cloud, where they were accustomed to go from time to time for country air. They did so with the knowledge and approval of both Bailly and Lafayette.¹ But on Monday the 18th of April, Paris rose once again and determined the movements of the king.

¹ Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 178.

The religious question was just then creating great disturbance in the capital. The law which had installed a conforming clergyman in every parish church did not affect the chapels attached to convents, and to these "the faithful" were in the habit of resorting. But the nuns in the Paris convents were not always careful to measure their words when the government was concerned, and on the 9th of April the *poissardes* of the markets, who from time immemorial had assumed a certain authority in the city, resolved to visit the convents and correct the offenders. They were accompanied by the usual mob, but it seems to have been the women only who seized, stripped and beat the "sisters" so mercilously and with such contumely that several never recovered from the shock but died. The municipality did not succeed in stopping the *poissardes* until hundreds had suffered at their hands, but to prevent a recurrence of such doings it closed the convent chapels henceforth to the public, and thus deprived orthodox catholics of a means of worship.¹

This was an infringement of the rights of man, which the Directory of the Department of Paris refused to countenance. By an *arrêté* of April 11th it deprecated in the strongest terms the conduct of the *poissardes*, and while confirming the

¹ Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. ii. p. 213 seq., also B. M. P., *L'église constitutionnelle*, R. 349.

closing of convent chapels, decided that non-juring catholics should have the privilege of opening chapels of their own.¹

In such circumstances Palm Sunday dawned. That morning the king and queen went as usual to the chapel of the Louvre, but they went in spite of remonstrance from the National Guard, who tried to prevent the king's clergy from saying mass.² That same morning the "faithful" attending their newly-hired chapel of the Théatins were molested by the Paris mob, and in the evening the Cordeliers Club resolved to go next day to the Tuileries and demand a promise from the king to send away his household priests and to attend divine service at his parish church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, on Easter Day.³ But if the king were to obey the Cordeliers he must not leave Paris. Accordingly, when on Monday morning the royal family descended after mass to the carriage waiting to take them to Saint-Cloud, they found the Carrousel filled by a crowd, which for nearly two hours defied every constituted authority in Paris.

The king's wish was obvious. He, the queen, their children and sister, with Madame de Tourzel,

¹ Sciout, L., *La constitution civile du clergé*, vol. ii. p. 223.

² Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 178.

³ *Id.*, p. 178.

the royal governess, entered the carriage, but the grenadiers of the National Guard held the horses' heads and refused to let them move. Lafayette entreated and harangued, Bailly persuaded, but in vain. The Department of Paris sent a deputation to the National Assembly asking it to advise Bailly to use his authority as Mayor, and proclaim martial law, but the troops were almost to a regiment in sympathy with the Revolution and Bailly refused. "The Club of the Cordeliers," says la Rocheterie "not he, was master of Paris."¹ The scene, humiliating as it appears, had in it a certain element of triumph for the king and queen, held visibly prisoners by the people. "It is remarkable," said Louis to Bailly, "that having restored liberty to the nation I should not myself be free."² "It is for you, sir," he said to Lafayette, when in despair the Commandant turned to the king for orders, "to do what you can to carry your Constitution into effect."³ And when at last the king gave up the undignified contest and the queen, lifting her little son in her arms, swept through the soldiers, they, rendered complacent the moment they had gained their point, shouted "*Vive la reine!* we will defend you." "We depend upon that," Marie-

¹ Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 179.

² Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 273.

³ *Id.*, p. 272.

Antoinette replied, "but you must acknowledge that we are not free."¹

This unfortunately was the one point on which the royal family chose to dwell. To Marie-Antoinette at this crisis everything which might prove to Europe that the king and queen were under the compulsion of their subjects was gain. It gave the more reason for remonstrance by the powers, and the better pretext for a future disavowing of the Constitution, and on this dreary suicidal path the king lumbered after her. It was the most foolish attitude she could take towards France, for it assumed a relationship between sovereign and subject on which any attempt at real kingship was impossible.

Of all the governing bodies in Paris the Directory of the Department of Paris was perhaps the most friendly to the king. It had as its President the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, a reformer, though not a democrat, but it counted Talleyrand, the now secularised Bishop of Autun, and Danton, fast becoming the great leader of the democratic party, among its members. That same evening the Directory called a special meeting of its Council-General and drew up an address praying the king to dismiss from his service all enemies of the Constitution. The address was probably dictated by a desire to advise the king

¹ Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 180.

for his own interest. The enemies of liberty, it declared, feared the patriotism of the king, and therefore endeavoured to alarm his conscience. "Humiliated by decrees which they hated, and concealing their pride under a veil of pretended holiness, they shed hypocritical tears over religion. These, Sire, are the men by whom you are surrounded. It is seen with sorrow that you favour the non-jurors, that your servants are nearly all enemies of the Constitution, and it is feared that these preferences, only too evident, indicate your real feeling."¹ Next day the Municipality drew up an address to the same effect, and the king said farewell one after another to his gentlemen of the bed-chamber, while the queen parted with Madame de Duras, her *dame d'honneur*, and Madame de Chimay, her *dame du palais*,² tried friends of years' standing. It was in the eyes of the queen another proof "that we are not free."

But perhaps the most significant feature in an episode, to which, as Mr. Morse Stephens justly remarks,³ it is impossible to attach too great importance, is the concession of the authorities to the will of the people. It was the king *versus* the people,

¹Schmidt, A., *Tableaux de la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 18, *Compte-rendu du département du 18 avril*.

²Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 275 *seq.* Madame de Chimay returned after five weeks' absence.

³Stephens, H. M., *History of the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. 441.

and the people won. On April 19th the king went to the National Assembly and protested against the proceedings of the day before. He repeated the assurances of his attachment to the Constitution, and, foreshadowing the position he was afterwards to take up, urged that his personal liberty must not be interfered with, lest the people should imagine the sanction he gave to the laws was given under compulsion. The President of the Assembly replied that disturbance was an inevitable accompaniment to the progress of liberty, and a deputy suggested that the representatives of the nation should provide their sovereign with a passport!¹

On the 21st Lafayette, wounded by his powerlessness over the National Guard, resigned his command. In consternation at what they regarded as a national calamity, the forty-eight sections of Paris met. The National Guard promised obedience to their General, sent deputations to him and to the Hôtel de Ville, and on Sunday the 24th Lafayette yielded and agreed to remain. The people had had their way on Monday the 18th; they had it again on the 24th. Meantime the king and queen, sorely against theirs, attended mass in the Church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois,² and no one, General, soldiers, Assembly, Department,

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, xxv. p. 201.

² Rocheterie, Maxime de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 181.

or Municipality had uttered one word of apology or regret.

The Department, it is true, had made an effort, but it was an effort which in the eyes of the Tuileries might very well be translated into an insult. On the afternoon of the 18th it had met to discuss the events of the morning, and had decided to convoke the sections, in order to consider whether the king should still be allowed to go to Saint-Cloud or whether he should only be thanked for having given up the project.¹ The people were to be called solemnly together, and to decide officially whether the king might be thanked for remaining in his capital or whether he might spend a fortnight in one of his own palaces, not more than an hour's drive from Paris!

But even a message of thanks from his subjects was denied the king. Danton, who was the most influential man in the section of the Théâtre-Français, maintained that the question did not admit of discussion, and carrying his own section, carried also all the others.²

After this event Louis hesitated no longer. Pre-

¹ *Ami du roi*, du 21 avril 1791.

² Schmidt, A., *Tableaux de la révolution*, vol. i. p. 24. The Théâtre-Français in 1791 was the theatre now known as the Odéon, and gave its name to the section. In this section was the old monastery of the Cordeliers from which the district and afterwards the club took its name.

parations for flight, as we have seen, had begun as early as November 1790;¹ the carriage with its *cantine* to hold eight bottles, its case of cooking utensils, its ample cushions and cumbersome curtains was ordered in December,² but it was only after the incident of the *poignards* on February 28th that the route was finally determined. The king and his advisers fixed on Montmédy, a few miles from the Belgian frontier, as his destination, and decided to travel there by Châlons, Sainte-Menehould and Varennes, through the district over which the Marquis de Bouillé, an experienced officer and a royalist, had military command. On the pretext of guarding a sum of money, intended to pay the troops under his command, Bouillé was to post small detachments from picked regiments at each town between Châlons, and Montmédy; these were to await the arrival of the royal family and as soon as the royal carriage passed, close in behind it, thus forming an escort strong enough, if need be, to prevent any interruption to the flight. Once at Montmédy, Austrian troops were near, to whose protection Louis could appeal should his people disappoint him and fail to rally round him in response to the Manifesto which would explain his conduct.

¹ See p. 276.

² See on flight to Varennes. Bimbenet, *Fuite de Louis XVI. à Varennes*; Fournel, V., *L'événement de Varennes*; Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*.

Such was the plan to which the behaviour of the Parisians in the matter of Saint-Cloud set the seal. "Our position," wrote the queen on April 20th to the Comte de Mercy, "is frightful; we must positively end it by next month, the king wishes it even more than I."¹ What further delay occurred was caused only by preparation.

¹ Rocheterie et Beaucourt, *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 234.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FLIGHT OF THE KING.



PÉTION.

THE Constitution was nearly finished, the halcyon days of France at length surely about to begin, when at ten o'clock on the morning of June 21st, Paris was startled by the sound of the tocsin at the Hôtel de Ville and by three sharp cannon-shots.¹ Immediately

shops were shut, work forsaken, and men rushed out to find the cause. The king had fled. "My servants," wrote an English lady then resident in Paris, "informed me that the king was gone, that there *was* no king, and they looked more dead than alive."² "The people," says the *Ami du roi*, "so

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 102.

² Unpublished letters of Mrs. Edward Standish, of Standish, Wigan.

easily roused, so noisy in their excitement, were quiet with the quietness of consternation. . . . The news fell on the National Assembly like a thunder-bolt," and even the deputies of the Left sat "crushed and silent."¹ France without a king was an unknown, almost an unimaginable, quantity.

Accordingly, the first impulse was to bring back the king. Startled by the news that Louis was gone, Lafayette hurried to the Tuileries; on his way he met Bailly, still Mayor of Paris, and Alexandre de Beauharnais, President of the National Assembly. The three officials consulted together. "Is the arrest of the king necessary to the public safety?" asked Lafayette. The two others replied that it was; "then I take the responsibility upon myself," said the general, and consulting with the municipality, he despatched couriers in every direction to find out what route the king had taken, and to carry messages to "all good citizens, to the effect that the king had been carried off by the enemies of the country" and must be stopped.²

At once all the authorities in Paris were alert. The heat of party was for the moment forgotten. Right and Left in the Assembly, Department and Municipality in the town worked

¹ *Ami du roi*, du 20 juin 1791.

² Lafayette, *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 76, and *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxvi., p. 361.

together for the preservation of public order and of peace. For convenience of consultation with the Assembly the Council-General of the Department took up its quarters for the time in one of the rooms of the Salle du Manège; the Municipality told off six of its members to carry the *arrêtés* of the Department to the Hôtel de Ville, and two deputies of each section waited there to convey them to their respective *comités*. To the Hôtel de Ville also all decisions of the National Assembly were at once sent, and there proclaimed to the sound of trumpet.

By order of the Department travellers were stopped and examined, the gates of Paris closed, and seals set on the doors of the royal apartments at the Tuileries. A guard was set over the powder magazine, the prison authorities were authorised to use force should a riot occur, no groups were allowed to linger in the streets, and the delivery of letters ceased so that the *comité des recherches* might examine any that looked suspicious.

Such prompt measures reassured the people. The shops were reopened, men turned to their neglected work, traffic was resumed in the streets, the citizens looked grave, but no longer alarmed; after a few hours no stranger could have guessed that he looked on a kingdom deserted by its king.¹

¹ *Histoire de la révolution française par deux amis*, vol. vi. p. 101.

For that day only the Bourse did no business and the theatres were closed.¹

And while the Department and the Municipality were busied over the maintenance of public order, the National Assembly was quietly assuming supreme authority. First of all it issued a proclamation announcing that it would spend itself night and day in preventing any kind of disorder from arising because of the flight of the king. It then summoned the ministers and requested them in this emergency to assist the Assembly in its deliberations and to transact all necessary business in a room adjoining the Salle des États.²

One by one the ministers arrived, some promptly, but others unwillingly and after considerable delay. Duport du Tertre,³ Minister of Justice, was among the first to obey the summons and he brought with him news of an important document, the Manifesto left behind by the king to explain his flight, which had been found by a valet and given to M. de Laporte, Intendant of the Civil List. Laporte was sent for, and the Manifesto read. It

¹ See contemporary newspapers.

² *Décrets du 21 juin 1791* ; see also Arch. nat. C. 71.

³ M. L. F. Duport du Tertre, Keeper of Seals from Nov. 21st, 1790, when he succeeded M. de Cicé, Archbishop of Bordeaux, was afterwards Minister of Justice, until March 23rd, 1792. By a decree of April 27th, 1791, the title of Keeper of the Seals was changed to that of Minister of Justice.

was very long and was written entirely in the king's own hand.¹ Louis began by saying that so long as he had any hope that the methods of the National Assembly would conduce to the welfare of France, no personal sacrifice had weighed with him. But instead of good order and prosperity he saw anarchy. He, therefore, having abandoned hope in the Constitution, and having solemnly protested against the decrees he had been forced to sanction, wished to lay his case before France and the world. Louis then reviewed the events which had occurred since the 14th of July 1789, and the sacrifices he himself had made, and concluded this part of his declaration with the words "What then remains to the king but a vain pretence of royalty?"

In order to emphasise this admission, the most damaging, from his own point of view, which he could possibly make, the king took up, one by one, the different departments of the government—justice, internal administration, foreign affairs, finance, and showed how in each the executive had become a mere cypher. "Considering," he added, "that in these circumstances it is impossible for the king to work either good or evil, is it surprising that he endeavours to recover freedom of action or that he takes steps to place himself and his

¹ For Manifesto see *Arch. parl.* vol. xxvii. p. 378. The original in the *Arch. nat.* occupies 14 folio pages.

family in security? . . . Frenchmen, and, above all, Parisians," concluded the king, "inhabitants of a town whom the ancestors of His Majesty delighted to call the good town of Paris, beware of the suggestions and lies of your false friends, and return to your king! He will always be your father, your best friend; with what pleasure will he not forget all personal wrongs and see himself again in your midst, when a modified Constitution which he can freely accept has secured due respect to our holy religion, due regard for the property and status of every individual; when laws shall no longer be broken with impunity and when liberty shall rest on firm and immoveable bases!"

From this Manifesto Marie-Antoinette hoped much. She pictured a humbled Assembly, trembling before an offended sovereign, a sovereign who, by the decision and courage shown in leaving his capital, must awe his refractory subjects. Instead of this, the Assembly listened in profound silence as the President read the Manifesto of the king, and then passed it to the *comité de constitution* for consideration. As comment it instructed Montmorin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to inform the European Powers that the relations of France with foreign Courts remained unchanged; it decided that the king's sanction to decrees should be dispensed with, and that decrees could become laws by the

affixing of the Seal of State and the signature of ministers. Finally, in direct contravention of an order left by the king requiring the Seal to be sent to himself, it formally gave it over to the Minister of Justice to be used by him at the bidding of the National Assembly.¹

Next day, refusing Louis even the credit of a concerted plan, it issued a proclamation declaring "that a great crime had been committed, and that the king and royal family had been carried off during the night of the 20th June," and added that in case of the first functionary of the State deserting his post, or being carried away against his will, the representatives of the nation, being reinvested with every power necessary to the safety of the State, have the right to substitute some other authority for that of the king.²

Perhaps no attitude taken by their subjects could have been so disconcerting to the king and queen as this of quietly continuing ordinary routine. One main object of the royal flight was to awaken France to a sense of the royal importance. "The king must astonish his subjects," wrote Marie-Antoinette on the 1st of June to her brother Leopold.³ Alas! he did astonish his subjects, but it

¹ See *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xxvii. p. 378 seq.

² *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxvii. p. 420.

³ Rocheterie and Beaucourt, *Recueil authentique des lettres de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 246.

was by finding that the idea of kingship, which had been to France as that of a god, was after all only that of an idol.

Louis had fled and nothing happened. The Bourse again shouted its business, the public funds had not fallen in price, the theatres reopened, no Minister resigned, no public business was neglected, the National Assembly proceeded with its task of finishing the Constitution. "The king, until now believed to be an essential part of that Constitution, was found to be so artistically placed therein that he could be removed at will without in any way deranging the mechanism of the machine."¹ "There," said the democrats pointing to the Salle du Manège, "is our king ; Louis XVI. may go where he pleases."² The *coup d'état* had miserably failed.

Nor did the king and queen even succeed in detaching themselves from the new machine they so much disliked. They were stopped on their way—arrested by the Procurator of the Commune of Varennes, a grocer by trade, and kept prisoners in his back parlour until messengers arrived from the National Assembly, ordering a prompt return. It was a terrible anticlimax to the hopes the queen had cherished of the success of her venture.

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 591, a contemporary account of events, considered of historic value. Bib. nat.

² *Id.*

About ten o'clock on the evening of Wednesday the 22nd, Paris heard the news that the king was arrested at Varennes.¹ Since the morning of the day before, the National Assembly had held a permanent sitting and some of the tired deputies were leaving the hall when a throng of citizens, crowding the doors, drove them back. They had in their midst a courier almost dead with fatigue who could only gasp the words "the king has been stopped." With difficulty the President secured sufficient quiet to read the message sent from Varennes.² This heard, the crowd dispersed to spread and discuss the news, while the Assembly proceeded at once to issue the necessary directions.

No one was to leave Paris that night without express permission of the President of the National Assembly. All letters addressed to members of the royal family, the Comte de Fersen, and others known to be their friends, were to be retained by the authorities. The news brought by the courier was at once communicated to the Department, which gave orders that it should be immediately printed and copies sent to the Hôtel de Ville and the committees of the sections.³ Three members of the Assembly were chosen to meet the king, to

¹ Schmidt, A., *Tableaux*, vol. i. p. 42. *Procès-verbal du département du 22 juin 1791*.

² *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 585.

³ Schmidt, vol. i. p. 43 and *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxvii. p. 426.

carry him a copy of the proclamation and to accompany him on his return. The delegates chosen were Barnave, a generous if an ardent Constitutionalist ; Pétion, self-sufficient and arrogant in his democratic sympathies ; and de la Tour-Maubourg, at heart a royalist. With them went Matthieu Dumas, an adjutant-general of the National Guard.¹

Next day was the religious holiday of Corpus Christi, or the *Fête-Dieu* as it is called in France. A deputation of the National Assembly, escorted by the grenadiers of the National Guard, with Lafayette at their head, attended mass at the Church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, after which the grenadiers returned with the deputies to the Salle du Manège, there to take a new oath of fidelity to the Constitution. It may be remembered that the Assembly had decreed that all soldiers should renew their oath on the 14th of each July.² That date was not far off, and because of the king's flight the Assembly on June 22nd proposed to modify the form of the oath. "I swear," ran the new formula, "to employ the arms put into my hands for the defence of the country, and to maintain the Constitution decreed by the Assembly against all its enemies, within and without. I swear to die rather than to suffer the invasion of French territory by

¹ *Archives parl.*, vol. xxvii. p. 428; See also *Œuvres de Pétion* for his account of the return.

² See p. 250.

foreign troops and to obey no orders save those given in consequence of the decrees of the National Assembly.”¹

This oath, sworn to on the spot by every military deputy in the Salle du Manège, Lafayette thought it well to impose at once on his men, and to take himself in their presence, for patriots whispered that it was strange that the whole royal family should have escaped, and looked askance at the Commandant of the National Guard to whose care France had committed her sovereign.²

Lafayette therefore seized this opportunity of publicly renewing his oath of fidelity. The occasion was the more public because the day was a holiday. The procession of the deputies had attracted attention and was followed by another of the trades—of the bakers, charcoal-burners, market porters, and *poissardes*, accompanied by a motley mob. These too went to the National Assembly, heard Lafayette protest afresh his ardour for the Constitution, heard the President offer the soldiers the new oath of allegiance, and were witness of the proud bearing of the men, as with head erect and lifted hand they took the oath from which the king's name was now excluded. As they did so, a band seated on empty benches at the back of the hall played *Ça ira* and the

¹ *Archives parl.*, vol. xxvii. p. 409.

² *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 102.

citizens identifying themselves, as usual, with the occasion, marched in their turn past the President and took the oath.¹ The ministers, the National Assembly, the National Guard, and the Paris mob had agreed that government was possible without a king.

On Friday June 24th things went further. Reports came that men with evil intentions were preparing uniforms similar to those of the National Guard with the purpose of getting dangerously near the person of the king when he re-entered Paris ; that the Cordeliers Club had printed and pasted on the streets of Paris its famous declaration, taken at its first sitting after the flight of the king, to the effect " that this club, containing as many tyrannicides as members, had sworn to poignard any tyrant who should dare to attack the frontiers, or attempt anything whatsoever against the Constitution." ² More significant still, was a gathering of the people on the Place Vendôme, and the signing of a great petition praying the Assembly to decide nothing regarding the fate of the king until the eighty-three departments had been consulted.³ At the same time the *Société fraternelle des deux sexes* asked that the King of France and " his wife " should be summoned to answer for their conduct at the bar of the

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 610, and *Journal Logographique*, vol. xxviii. p. 288.

² Schmidt, A., *Tableaux de la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 50.

³ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique*, p. 125.



Varennes

VARENNES.

X House said to be that of the Procurator Sauce in which the Royal Family was detained

From sketch by Louisa S. MacLehose.



Assembly,¹ while every section in Paris requested that the royal cortége bringing back the king might not be allowed to pass through the city, as it would block the streets and hinder ordinary business.² This then was the outcome of the flight to Montmédy. Citizens who did not wish to be troubled with their king in the streets ; clubs that openly threatened death to any man that should touch the Constitution for the hope of whose revision Louis had fled from his capital ; Societies who would have handed him over to the will of the people !

Why then did Paris bring back her king ? Why did she not let him go ? First of all because she had to act before she had time to think, because she had not yet learned to do without a king ; but chiefly because his arrest was necessary for the safety of France. The princes were on the frontier, the Alsatians were waiting for a pretext for war. Marie-Antoinette was an Austrian and her brother was Emperor. If Louis crossed the frontier, men expected to see France invaded by the foreign powers, demanding that he be reinstated on what terms they chose to impose. Therefore it was, that immediately on hearing of his flight, the Assembly requested M. de Rochambeau, general of the army on the Flanders frontier, to

¹ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique*, p. 134, quoted from *L'ami du roi* (Royau) *du 2 juillet 1791*.

² Schmidt, A., *Tableaux de la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 50.

go at once to the frontiers and see that they were in a proper state of defence ;¹ that its *comité militaire* inserted the new clause in the military oath, a clause whereby the soldiers of every regiment and every National Guard in France swore to die rather than suffer the invasion of foreign troops ; and that the Department of Paris authorised the committees of all the sections to enroll volunteers for the frontiers, and to open a subscription towards their expenses.² The dread of foreign invasion brought back the king.

Early on the morning of June 22nd, M. Romœuf, an officer despatched by Lafayette and the National Assembly, reached Varennes with the Assembly's order to arrest the king. As aide-de-camp to Lafayette, Romœuf knew the king and queen well, and it was with confusion, grief, and even tears in his eyes, that he handed Louis the packet. "There is no longer a king in France" exclaimed the unfortunate monarch,³ and at half-past seven re-entered the big *berline*, and with his family set out on the return journey in obedience to his subjects' will. That dreary, heartless journey back to Paris was a revelation to the king. Now at last his eyes were opened to the fact—of which not even the *Fête de la Fédération* had convinced him—that France was indeed

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xxvii. 360.

² Schmidt, A., *Tableaux de la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 36.

³ Fournel, V., *L'événement de Varennes*, p 212.

attached to the Constitution. "I own," he said afterwards to Lafayette, "that until these last events I thought you had surrounded me with a set of persons of your own opinion, and that your opinion was not that of France. I discovered during my journey that I was mistaken."¹ Nowhere had the people rallied round the king, everywhere they had put the Constitution before the sovereign. At post after post, as he fled from Paris, the soldiers refused to obey orders which they believed opposed to the spirit of the Constitution; in town after town as he returned, Louis was made to feel what it was to have betrayed his oath. "One does not salute a king in flight," observed a sturdy citizen in the hearing of the king.²

The attitude of Paris was as significant. The streets were placarded with a notice emanating from the Palais-Royal warning the people that "whoever applauded the king would be beaten, whoever insulted him would be hanged."³ Here and there a royalist *citoyenne* had put a black ribbon on her cap, here and there a citizen ventured to remove his hat. National Guards sternly ordered the ribbon to be hidden, the hat to be replaced, and when late in the evening of the 25th the royal carriage entered Paris from the Porte de la Conférence, and crossed the Place Louis XV.,

¹ Lafayette, *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 91.

² Tourzel, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 343.

³ Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 229.

no voice was raised in welcome, and only one solitary deputy among the vast crowd ventured to remove his hat ;¹ in sullen silence the people let their king pass by. Close behind was another carriage in which sat the heroes of the arrest, Drouet the postmaster of Sainte-Menehould, who had first recognised the king, and a few of the people of Varennes. As it passed voices were raised, heads bared, handkerchiefs waved and laurel wreaths presented.² The cry of *Vive la nation !* replaced that of *Vive le roi !* while parading in the near neighbourhood was a band of men armed with lances and carrying a banner on which was painted "To live free or die ; Louis XVI. expatriating himself, no longer exists for us."³

The impression made by the journey was confirmed by the return to the Tuileries. Entering their old apartments the king and queen found their desks opened, and their papers removed ; while the gentlemen and ladies who had accompanied them on their journey were put under guard and forbidden to follow them to their rooms.⁴ Lafayette, instead, accompanied the king and read to him the orders of the Assembly. The king, queen, and Dauphin were to be strictly guarded ; all concerned

¹ Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 229.

² *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 102.

³ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 614.

⁴ Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 346, and *Arch. parl.*, vol. xxvii. p. 517.

in the flight, even Louis and Marie-Antoinette, were to be examined, and on this examination would depend the king's future position in the realm. Until that decision was made the Minister of Justice was to continue to affix the Seal of State to the decrees, and each minister was, in his own department, to carry out the executive. "What," said Lafayette as he concluded, "are your Majesty's orders?" "It seems to me," replied the king, "that I am under yours."¹

¹ Lafayette, *Mémoires*, vol. iii. p. 85.

CHAPTER XX.

MONARCHY OR REPUBLIC?



DANTON.

IF the fall of the Bastille in July 1789 meant the introduction into France of republican institutions, the flight of the king in June 1791 meant the first open advocacy of a Republic.

For months there had been growing up in Paris a republican party, represented in journalism by the *Ami du peuple* of Marat, by the *Patriote français* of Brissot, by the *Révolutions de Paris* of Prudhomme, and other journals hardly less well known. This party found its head-quarters in the Cordeliers Club¹ and its leader in Danton; it

¹When the districts were replaced in 1790 by the sections the *comité* of the Cordeliers district decided not to break up but "to substitute for the word district, which they could no longer retain, that of *Club des Cordeliers*." They adopted as the seal of their society the eye,

had the sympathy of the *Sociétés fraternelles*¹ and of many among the Jacobins, but it was not as yet popular, and was considered the extreme of the Extreme Left or democratic party, by whom it was often disavowed. It had on its side a sense of logical consistency and "only waited some flagrant mistake on the part of royalty to enlighten public opinion."² That mistake was made when Louis fled.

This then was the opportunity of the Republicans, who lost no time in instructing public opinion. Marat proposed a dictatorship. "There is but one escape," he wrote in the *Ami du Peuple* of June 22nd, "from the danger to which your leaders have exposed you . . . choose the citizen who has shown the greatest enlightenment, zeal and fidelity, and

emblem of watchfulness, and they declared themselves the friends of the rights of man and of the citizen." (Robinet, *Danton, homme d'état*, p. 73.) The club did not confine itself, as the district was obliged to do, to inhabitants of the district, and under the direction of Danton, its President, and his friends, out-Jacobined the Jacobins.

¹ In the autumn of 1790 a certain M. Dansart, keeper of a boarding-house, gathered together in one of the halls belonging to the Jacobins a few artisans, with their wives and children, who resided in the neighbourhood. He brought in his pocket a single candle, and by its light read and interpreted to his audience the decrees of the Assembly. By-and-by the little gathering grew into a Society and called itself *La Société fraternelle*. Sister societies sprang up both in Paris and in the country, and, open to both men and women, were sometimes called *Les Sociétés fraternelles des deux sexes*. See Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins*, and B. M. P., *Club des Jacobins*, R. 157.

² Aulard, F. A., *Histoire politique*, p. 113.

obey him religiously.”¹ Prudhomme treated kingship as a mere contract. “Louis,” he said, “is paid twenty-eight millions annually to execute the sovereign will of the people. It is an engagement from which either party can honourably withdraw. . . . If Louis had abdicated he would have been within his rights, and the nation would have had no more to say than a master has whose valet wishes to leave his service.”² Danton went further and frankly demanded a Republic. On the 22nd of June the Cordeliers Club drew up an address to the National Assembly asking it to abolish the Monarchy, and to set up a Republic in its stead. “In 1789 we were slaves,” runs the document, “in 1790 we fancied ourselves free; now at the end of June 1791 we are free in reality. Legislators! you consecrated the bondage of the French when you declared France a Monarchy, and until Louis XVI. proved himself a traitor and an ingrate we could only blame ourselves for having ruined our own work. But the times have changed, there no longer exists the pretended convention of a people with its king. Louis XVI. has abdicated, henceforth he is nothing to us unless indeed he becomes our enemy.”³ It goes on to announce the political

¹ *Ami du peuple*, du 22 juin 1791.

² *Révolutions de Paris* du 26 juin 1791.

³ Robinet, *Danton, homme d'état*, p. 79.

creed of the Cordeliers. "The Society of the Rights of Man believes that a nation is self-sufficient, that it can do everything either by itself or by officials removable at its will. It believes that there is no individual in the State whose riches, whose prerogatives, are such that he should be permitted to corrupt the agents of political administration. It believes that there is no office in the State which ought not to be accessible to every member of the State, and it considers that the more important an office, the shorter should be its tenure by any one person . . . it does not conceal its belief that a king—above all an hereditary king—is incompatible with liberty."¹

Such are a few examples of the way in which the Republicans strove to instruct public opinion. But public opinion, if instructed, was not convinced. On the evening of June 22nd a copy of the Cordeliers' address was taken to the Jacobin Club in the hope of receiving its powerful support. But the Jacobins, revolutionary as they were, still called themselves constitutional monarchists, and refused even to hear the address read. "Everywhere," says a contemporary, "in every street, club and *café*, men cry out for a Republic—yet everywhere all hearts cling to a king."² The Republicans therefore ceased for the

¹ Robinet, J. F. E., *Danton, homme d'État*, p. 79.

² *Voilà ce qu'il faut faire du roi*, Bib. nat. L6³⁹5137.

moment to demand a Republic, they wrote pamphlets, gained the open adherence of Condorcet, disciple of the *philosophes*, and waited their time.

Now side by side with these republican manifestations, a reaction in favour of the Monarchy was taking place within the National Assembly itself. The men who had at this time the greatest influence in the Assembly were Adrien Duport, Barnave and Charles Lameth; they were known as the Triumvirate and the saying went that "Duport was the brain, Barnave the tongue, and Charles Lameth the hand."¹ They were leaders of the Left or constitutional party as distinguished from the extreme Left or Democrats. They were all young, and had among their followers nobles belonging to ancient families, as well as a large proportion of the Third Estate. To these men the king's flight came as a shock, awakening them to see where France really stood and how near she was to civil war and anarchy. Besides this, Barnave on the return from Varennes had for the first time come intimately in contact with the royal family. "Let Pétion and Barnave travel in the royal carriage," said de la Tour-Maubourg, "and learn to be royalists—I am one already."² And Barnave, young, generous and

¹ Stephens, H. Morse, *History of the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. 240.

² Tourzel, Mme. de, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 330.

enthusiastic, learned his lesson. "Before our flight," wrote Marie-Antoinette to her brother on July the 30th, "the National Assembly was divided into a great number of parties . . . to-day things are much more hopeful. The men who have the greatest influence over public affairs have united, and have openly declared themselves for the king, and in favour of the preservation of the monarchy."¹

One reason of this was the fear of a democracy. The Constitution, despite all the changes it had effected, was not a democratic institution; it had been built up by a *bourgeois* Assembly for the *bourgeoisie*, and by the introduction of the *marc d'argent* as an electoral qualification, it had closed the doors of the hall of the National Assembly on many an ardent aspirant. The Constitutionals therefore were well aware that the deliverances of the Republicans against the Monarchy were directed against themselves as much as against the king. They had no faith in government by the people, and to prevent so great a calamity they were ready to commit "the unpardonable error of still believing a Monarchy possible"² as a part of the Constitution of France.

Accordingly, on July 13th, after hearing the

¹ Rocheterie et Beaucourt, *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 259.

² Robinet, J. F. E., *Danton, homme d'État*, p. 83.

report of the Commissioners appointed to examine into the circumstances of the king's flight, the National Assembly adopted the fiction that Louis had been carried off against his will and was therefore innocent of treason against the State, and proceeded to consider the conditions under which he should continue to reign. Now although the Jacobins and their followers were not yet ready to demand a Republic they were quite ready to support the Republicans in their desire to have the fate of the king referred directly to the people. When, therefore, the Cordeliers drew up a petition to the National Assembly on July 12th, asking it to decide nothing until the opinion of the departments was known, the Jacobins discussed the drafting of a petition to the same effect to be sent for signature to all the patriotic societies in France.¹

The Assembly, however, refused to listen to the Cordeliers and the Republicans had again to wait. But the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille was at hand, and with it fresh possibilities. Paris was in a restless, excited state, and her populace found relief in flocking out to the Champ de Mars and holding revolutionary demonstrations against the king. They went there on the 14th, and again on the 15th of July, and signed a petition prepared by the Republicans reiterating the request that the

¹ Aulard, F. A., *Histoire politique*, p. 147 seq.

people be consulted regarding the fate of the king.¹

With this petition delegates were despatched to the Assembly, followed as usual by a large crowd. The delegates were refused admission to the Salle du Manège on the plea that the decree was already voted and that their petition was objectless. They submitted, but went to the Palais-Royal,—called since June 21st the Palais d'Orléans,—ordered the closing of its music halls and theatres, and covered its walls with placards calling on the “patriots” to draw up a monster petition, sign it next day on the Altar of the Country, and swear never to recognise Louis XVI. as king. “For the first time,” says the *Chronique de Paris*, “the people were entirely opposed to the opinion of the Assembly.”²

Accordingly, having given due notice of their intention to the Municipality, the petitioners went to the Champ de Mars, where Danton and three others, standing one at each corner of the great Altar read the petition to the crowd. “The undersigned,” it ran, “pray the National Assembly, in the name of the Nation to receive the abdication made by Louis XVI. on June 21st of the crown delegated to him, and to provide for his replacement by all constitutional means; and declare that they will never

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 641.

² See *Chronique de Paris* du 16 juillet 1791.

recognise Louis XVI. as their king unless the majority of the Nation expresses a wish contrary to theirs.”¹ That evening the Assembly voted its second decree to the effect that until the Constitution was finished, and accepted in its entirety by the king, Louis should remain under strict surveillance, and should continue to abstain from any share in the government. On this the Jacobins decided to withdraw their petition and the Republicans, growing obstinate, to present another.

On Sunday, the 17th of July, the Champ de Mars was again thronged by the Paris populace. A third and last petition, the work of the popular Societies, and inspired, though not signed, by Danton, lay on the Altar of the Country. It prayed the Assembly to annul its decree of the previous evening, to consider the king as having abdicated, and to convoke a new National Assembly which should organise a new executive power.²

So far, from the day when Paris heard that the king had fled, until this Sunday morning, there had been demonstration but no riot; now, alas! riot and bloodshed followed. Two men were discovered hidden under the steps of the altar, and the people, instantly imagining a plot to blow up the altar and

¹ Aulard, A., *Histoire politique*, p. 150. See also Champagneux (Mme. Roland) *Œuvres*, vol. ii. p. 74.

² Aulard, A., *Histoire politique*, p. 152. In the National Archives, Paris, W. 291 *seq.* are interesting papers on these incidents.

the petitioners who mounted it, dragged out the unfortunates, who were torn to pieces by an unruly group of ruffians. The incident excited the crowd, threats against the National Assembly were heard, and messengers were despatched to warn the Mayor.

Bailly, glad, say the revolutionary writers, of any pretext against the Democrats, hoisted the ominous red flag at the Hôtel de Ville, and preceded by another flag, accompanied Lafayette and the National Guard to the Champ de Mars. The flag was waved, the proclamation bidding the citizens disperse read three times; it was not well heard, and those who did hear, laughed.¹ It seems to have been impossible for the people to conceive that the head of their Municipality, or the fellow-citizens who had sworn never to draw arms against a compatriot, unless in direst need, would execute the law. But the order to fire was given, and though the volley was directed in the air, the people were roused and replied by stones; then the National Guard fired in earnest, panic followed, and it is said that three hundred citizens lost their lives that day.²

This unfortunate event made a deep impression on the people, and had a marked influence on the politics of France. Bailly and Lafayette were never

¹ Cf. Stephens, H. M., *History of the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. 463 and *Chronique de Paris du 18 juillet*, which defends Bailly.

² *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 644, see also *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxviii. p. 389.

forgiven ; Barnave, Duport, the Lameths were dethroned, and Danton, Pétion and Robespierre became the popular heroes ; France was no longer divided between Monarchists and Constitutionalists, but between Constitutionalists and Democrats. The Left became virtually the Right. It was then that the Constitutional members of the Jacobin Club broke off and joined the more moderate Feuillants,¹ strengthening the Democrats by leaving the Jacobins free to go all lengths, and giving names to the two great parties which were now to govern France.

But for the moment the republican party was crushed. Danton fled to England, Marat and the more violent leaders hid. The ordinary citizens and especially those of the provinces believed that the petitioners of July 17th were assassins in disguise. There was a royalist reaction ; Marie-Antoinette wrote hopefully to her brother, and the National Assembly hurried on to the completion of its work.

On the 5th of August the *comité de constitution* reported that its work was finished, and the Act ready for final revision. On Sunday the 7th the red flag which had floated over the Hôtel de Ville since the 17th of July was hauled down, and a white one hoisted in its stead in recognition that the

¹ The Feuillant Club existed as *La Société des amis de la patrie*, and met in a hall of the Feuillant monastery from May 1791, when it officially notified its existence to the Mayor (B. M. P., R. 157).





trouble was ended.¹ On the 30th the revision of the Constitution was completed and the Assembly decreed that no change might be made in it for thirty years to come. The Constitution was finished, but would the king accept it? He had disavowed it on June 21st, would he subscribe to it now? A Monarchy, not a Republic, was to be the form of French government, but was Louis XVI. to be the monarch? The answer depended on whether or no he accepted the Constitution.

"We are," wrote Marie-Antoinette on August 16th, to her old adviser and friend, the Comte de Mercy, "come to the moment when the Constitution will be presented to us for acceptance. It is in itself so monstrous that it is impossible that it can last long, but in the position in which we are placed dare we refuse it? No, and I shall prove why."² The reason given by the queen is patriotic. Because the Constitution was so bad, she believed that it would fall to pieces as soon as put in practice, and she desired that the king should so act that France, undeceived at last, could honourably return to the monarch which the Constitution virtually set aside. "To secure this," she continued, "when the act is presented to the king he must keep it for

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 270.

² Rocheterie et Beaucourt, *Lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 270.

a few days as he is not supposed to know what is in it until it has been officially presented to him. He must then summon the commissioners, and instead of criticising details, which would imply approval of the Act as a whole, or asking for changes which would probably be refused, he must tell the Assembly that his opinion has not changed, that he thinks it as impossible to govern under the new conditions as he did when he wrote his Manifesto of June 20th, but that he is ready to sacrifice himself for the peace of the country. Since, therefore, his people believe their happiness to consist in his acceptance of the Constitution, he does not hesitate to give it, adding that the sight of their happiness will enable him to forget the cruel wrongs he and his have suffered."¹

The programme here proposed was duly carried out. At nine o'clock on the evening of September 3rd, lighted by torches, preceded by Lafayette and National Guards on horseback and on foot, and followed by an immense crowd, a deputation of the National Assembly left the Salle du Manège for the Tuileries. The Porte-Royale, closed since the captivity of the king, was opened at their approach, and deputies and populace together entered the palace. The king came as soon as told and Thouret,

¹ Rocheterie et Beaucourt, *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 272.

reporter of the *comité de constitution*, handed him the precious document. "Sire," he said, "the Representatives of the Nation offer for your acceptance the Constitutional Act which declares the inalienable rights of the French people, maintains the true dignity of the throne, and reforms the government of the Empire."¹ As soon as the Act was in the hands of the king, the vexatious guard set over him and the queen on their return from Varennes was withdrawn and Louis, not Lafayette, gave the necessary orders.

Ten days later, on September 13th, the Assembly received a message from the king saying that he accepted the Constitution, and asking that an amnesty be decreed for all offences connected with the Revolution. The amnesty was voted there and then and carried at once to the king for his signature. Next day Louis went in state to the Assembly, accompanied by the queen and royal family, and by his ministers. He drove in the carriages used for his coronation and took the longest route, and almost felt a king again as he showed himself to his people. But the National Assembly had decreed that Louis should not feel a king. A dais set up by order of the Grand Master of Ceremonies was taken down by order of the

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 791. The original act signed by Louis is in the Arch. nat. A. 69, No. 4605.

Assembly, and when the Grand Master complained to the Minister of the Interior he only said that the Assembly must be obeyed.

As the king entered the hall the deputies rose and uncovered. They remained standing while he began his address, but at the words "I therefore swear to be faithful to the nation and the law," there was a general movement, and Louis, looking up, found himself the only man standing and without a hat. He turned pale at the affront, sat down, placed his hat on his head, and muttered the concluding words of the formula.¹ The Assembly would show no greater respect to the king's oath, already broken once, than to that of any other.

Yet when Louis and his ministers had signed the deed and rose to go, the whole Assembly broke up and accompanied them to the Tuileries. There, left by the deputies, and their attendants dismissed, the king and queen hurried to their own apartments. Louis was pale and agitated, and Marie-Antoinette deeply hurt, by what they held to be the disrespect of the deputies. "All is lost," exclaimed the king, throwing himself into a chair and covering his face with his handkerchief, "ah! Madame, you have been witness of this humiliation, you have come to France for this!"²

¹ *Chronique de Paris du 15 sep. 1791.*

² Campan, Mme. de., *Mémoires*, p 305.

Meantime Paris was rejoicing, and on Sunday September 18th the great Constitution so long expected, so piously worshipped, was proclaimed, first in the capital itself, at three different hours and different places, then at mid-day on the Champ de Mars. There, in the presence of a great crowd and some hundred thousand National Guards "the book of the nation's destinies," as the Constitutional Act was called, was solemnly laid by the Mayor of Paris on the Altar of the Country between four brasiers in which incense burned, while cannon roared and the people shouted and clapped their hands.¹

Every one now-a-days admits the defects of the Constitution, but however grave these were, the ideas which inspired the men who framed it were great ideas. Nowhere, unless in the American Constitution by which this was so greatly influenced, have the dignity and intrinsic worth of the citizen been more emphatically proclaimed. Unfortunately this idea was so strong in the minds of its framers that they made of it a dogmatic theology in which alone salvation might be found. The limitations of man were forgotten, or at least the limitations of the administrator, and the difference between a new country such as America accustomed to local

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 803, and B. M. P., *Constitution de 1791*, F. R. 81. *Détail exact de l'ordre de la marche du 18 sep. 1791*, also *Chronique de Paris du 19 septembre 1791*, p. 308.

institutions, and one like France subjected for centuries to central administration, was disregarded. The government was weakened by the powers conferred on inexperienced local bodies, while the idea of equality was exalted to the detriment of the greater idea of reverence, and religion herself was made subservient to politics.

Even at the moment, the Constitution had its critics ; and Barnave, with prophetic voice, declared that it touched the line where equality coincides with invasion of the rights of property, and liberty with the abolition of the Monarchy.¹ Not in thirty years, but in one year and three days, the Constitution was set aside, and the first Republic proclaimed.

¹ *Histoire authentique*, vol. ii. p. 789.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.



LEOPOLD II.

THE completion of the Constitution marks another stage in the history of the French Revolution. We have followed step by step the struggle which abolished the bulwarks of the old regime. We have seen the Three Orders of the realm, privilege, the hierarchy of the church, vested rights and territorial divisions totter and fall like Dagon before the ark which held the Tables of the Law.

"The National Assembly," runs the preamble to the Act of Constitution, "wishing to establish the French Constitution on the principles which it has just acknowledged and declared" (in the Declaration of Rights) "abolishes irrevocably the institutions which injured liberty and equality of rights."

"There are no longer either nobility, peerage, hereditary distinctions, distinctions of orders, feudal rule, patrimonial justices, or titles and prerogatives derived from these; there is no longer any order of chivalry, or any decoration for which proofs of nobility are required; there is no longer any superiority but that conferred by the exercise of public functions.

There is no longer sale of, or hereditary right to, any public office.

There no longer exists, either for any part of the nation or for any individual, any privilege or exception to the common law of all the French.

There are no longer *jurandes* or corporations of professions, arts or trades.

The law no longer recognises religious vows, or any other obligation contrary to natural rights or to the Constitution."¹ Again, "all taxes shall be equally divided, all offences shall receive the same punishment without respect of persons." "Property set apart for the expenses of public worship and for any public service belongs to the nation and is for all time at its disposal."²

With privilege abolished and civil rights attained, with national property at the disposal of the Assembly, and one system of laws over the whole of

¹ *Constitution française*, p. 9.

² *Id.*, p. II, *Dispositions fondamentales garanties par la Constitution*.

France it would seem that the *bourgeoisie* had nothing left to fight for, and the *manant* little to desire. "O people of France, and citizens of Paris, you who are always great and strong in times of difficulty, generous brothers, and you *citoyennes* virtuous and learned, who exercise in these *tribunes* the gentlest of influences (*sic*), behold the pledge of peace which the legislature gives you!"¹ Thus spoke the orator who greeted the Constitutional Act, when with great ceremony it was brought into the Salle du Manège on October 4th and received by the deputies standing and uncovered.² But the Constituent Assembly had not left behind it a pledge of peace. The history of the year which elapsed between the king's acceptance of the Constitution and the fall of the Monarchy is one marked by bitter party strife within the Assembly, by struggle between the different authorities in Paris, by life and death conflict between the clubs and by war between France and the European powers. It was a struggle against which the Crown was helpless and to which it finally succumbed.

The Constitution completed, the Constituent Assembly dissolved, to be succeeded on October 1st 1791 by the Second or Legislative Assembly, so-called because its task was confined to that of legislation.

¹ *Le Logographe* du 5 oct. 1791.

² *Id.*

Now before the first Assembly broke up, it decreed that no one of its members should sit in the Legislative Assembly, thereby depriving the country of the experience gained in the Constituent Assembly. This was the more mischievous because the task of the Legislative Assembly was less inspiring than that of its predecessor. There were no great reforms to effect, no great principles to fight for, little to induce men to sacrifice ease or wealth, while the tradition of politics, and the sense of duty which tradition brings, could hardly yet exist in France. The best men available were not attracted, and the new deputies were mostly lawyers and journalists, chosen often from the administrative bodies of departments and districts, and very many of them young.

At the same time, while the self-denying ordinance of the Constituent Assembly deprived France of experienced legislators, it contributed to party strife by adding to the importance of the clubs. For, self-expelled from the Assembly, the most powerful among the original deputies remained in Paris, and as members of the Feuillant or Jacobin Clubs, influenced and incited their respective parties in the Salle du Manège. Thus Barnave, Duport and the Lameths from the Feuillant Club led the Constitutionalists—which were now the Right—while Robespierre and his friends in the Jacobin Club inspired the Left.

The Jacobins had done their best to secure a majority in the new Assembly, but had failed. The majority was Constitutionalist or Feuillant, and with it sat the few Royalist who were deputies in the Legislative Assembly.

But although the Left was numerically less than the Right it was the stronger party, and to this several causes contributed. It had a definite aim, was united, and was backed by the resistless force of the Jacobin clubs. The Right, on the contrary, was divided, and had no organisation behind it comparable in influence to that of the Jacobins.¹ The Right wished to maintain the Constitution and to strengthen it in the direction of a stronger executive, but could not agree on details. The Left was at one in desiring to carry out the Declaration of Rights to its logical issue, and was not to be held back by the Constitution. —“Above all,” wrote Prudhomme in an article addressed to the new legislators, “do not regard the Constitution as the summit of human wisdom, the one object you have in view is the Revolution.”² And besides a definite aim, and powerful backing, the

¹ In December 1791 the Feuillant club ceased to exist, although the party survived. It had complained of “paid disturbances” which made deliberation impossible. Pétion, then Mayor of Paris, accused it, in his turn, of having enemies to the Constitution among its members; and the Assembly, incited by him, refused to allow any club to meet in its precincts, of which the Feuillant monastery was a part. Deprived of its meeting-place the club fell to pieces. See *Œuvres de Pétion*, vol. iv.

² *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 117.

Left possessed the orators best fitted to win the votes of the four hundred Impartials who formed the Centre, and to sway the opinion of the *tribunes*. With such names as Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, and Merlin de Thionville, the Right had none to compare.

If then the Left was bound to rule, what was its attitude towards the king? At first one of resigned loyalty, but very soon of active opposition. Prudhomme, in the article just quoted, thus sums up the situation. "Since it has been decided that for some time to come kings are necessary to Society, since our 'holy' Constitution has thus decreed, let us have a king, but let us have him for our sakes, not for his. It is for our representatives to keep him in his place, to oblige him to yield to his sovereign, the people all the homage which until now the nation has had the folly of bestowing on the first of its functionaries." ¹

In the same spirit members of the Left sought to regulate the manner of receiving the king on his first visit to the Legislative Assembly. "I would fain believe," said Guadet, an advocate from Bordeaux and an "austere Republican," ² "that the French people will always hold in greater reverence the simple chair on which is seated the President of the Representatives of the Nation than the gilded seat on

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 117.

² Stephens, H. M., ii. p. 8. See this for interesting biographical details on the members of the Legislative Assembly.

which sits the head of its executive. As to the titles of 'Sire' and 'Majesty' I wonder that the National Assembly should think it worth while to deliberate upon them. 'Sire' belongs to the feudal system which no longer exists, and 'Majesty' is a term which may only be applied to God or the people."¹ For the moment Guadet's speech carried the Assembly and his proposals were decreed, but an immediate reaction caused the decree to be rescinded and the king was received by the Legislative with the same ceremonial as he had been by the Constituent Assembly.

From the day that Louis accepted the Constitution of 1791, he made up his mind to act in accordance with it. He vetoed certain decrees, it is true, and for the first time in his life he pursued a definite, though secret, policy ; but he had a constitutional right to do the first, and he was careful, as he believed, to keep the second within constitutional limits. It might even be contended that the last year of his reign was that in which Louis XVI. was most nearly a king. But events had now gone beyond any control Louis was capable of exercising. His mind was very slow, and his will was weak. He only discovered that France truly loved the Constitution when his flight from Paris revealed to France that her king

¹ See *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxxiv. p. 81 seq., *Séance du 5 oct. 1791*, for this and other speeches.

did not; and he only began to exercise the veto when his people had ceased to trust his intentions as well as his power to carry them into effect. Had the king been at one with the great mass of his people, the power of the Jacobins must have been curbed.

During the first period of the Revolution, that is, so long as the framing of the Constitution was in progress, France had been free to fight her battle for liberty with but little disturbance from foreign politics. Indeed, as has been well said, "the men of 1789 were concerned with humanity as a whole and despised the details of international relations."¹

But as the Revolution grew in strength it wounded European susceptibilities more and more deeply. Its attitude towards the Church alarmed good Catholics. Its determination to recover Avignon,—which since the 14th century had been under the rule of the Popes,—its quarrel with the German Princes, its sympathy with the Belgian insurrection, were gradually making it a menace to the peace of Europe, and to consult on these and other matters the king of Prussia invited Leopold of Austria to meet him in the summer of 1791 at Pillnitz, in Saxony.²

Before the meeting at Pillnitz took place, news

¹ Bourgoing, *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe pendant la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 153.

See Sorel, A., *L'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii., and chap. xi. of the *Cambridge History*, vol. viii. *The French Revolution*.

came from Paris which stirred the Emperor as no pleading from the Tuileries had done. The king and queen had fled, had been arrested and brought back prisoners to their capital. At once Leopold wrote to England, Russia, Prussia, Spain, the two Sicilies and Sardinia representing the Revolution as anarchy from which Europe had a right to preserve herself, and proposing a Conference, but he did not write to Sweden or Coblenz. The demands to be made by the Conference were somewhat high-handed. France was to cease arming, to repress the Revolution, to restore order, to re-establish feudal rights in Alsace, and to indemnify the German princes; to restore Avignon to the Holy See, to guarantee monarchical government and the liberty and safety of the king. If these things were refused, the powers would recall their agents, cease all commercial and personal communications with France and call out their troops.¹

Meantime, the French princes, left out of count by the Emperor, were taking council at Aix-la-Chapelle with Gustave of Sweden. The events of June had materially strengthened their position. Now, at last, they had a clear *casus belli*, and one which the Emperor himself acknowledged, while the very fact that the king was a captive gave the *émigrés* a freer hand. They talked of Louis as a dethroned,

¹ Sorel, A., *L'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii. pp. 232-235.

imprisoned, powerless sovereign whom they were no longer bound to obey, and they proposed a programme by which Monsieur, as Regent, should announce to France a European coalition, which should refuse to acknowledge the decrees of the Assembly or the forced sanctions of the king, and in case of any attempt on the king's person, should punish those concerned with the utmost penalties, and Paris with extermination.¹

Having determined on their policy the princes next endeavoured to secure the support of Austria, and for this purpose Artois obtained from Leopold an unwilling consent to his appearing at the Pillnitz Conference.²

It was on the 25th of August that Leopold of Austria and Frederick-William of Prussia met at the Castle of Pillnitz. There Artois, intent on inducing the two sovereigns to make some definite engagement, from which they could not recede, asked for their sanction to the programme of the *émigrés*. This demand the sovereigns refused. Two months had passed since Varennes, and Leopold knew that the king meant to accept the Constitution. But he wished to silence Artois and the *émigrés*, and accordingly on August 27th signed a declara-

¹ Geffroy, A., *Gustave III. et la cour de France*, vol. ii. p. 168 seq., and Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii. p. 219.

² *Id.*, vol. ii. p. 252 seq.

tion with Prussia alone. "Having heard the representations of Monsieur and of the Comte d'Artois," runs the document, "their Majesties of Austria and Prussia believe the situation of Louis XVI. to be an object of common interest to all the sovereigns of Europe. Their Majesties hope the Powers will recognise this and will not refuse to act conjointly with their Majesties . . . in restoring the king of France to a position from which he can in perfect liberty establish the basis of a monarchical government suitable alike to the rights of the sovereign, and to the well-being of France; in which case the Emperor and the King of Prussia will act promptly, and will give such orders to the forces as are necessary."¹

Guarded as was the declaration of Pillnitz—for the Emperor and king committed themselves to nothing unless the other Powers agreed—it was considered by many as a serious threat against the Revolution. "They say here," wrote the queen on September 12th, "that in the Declaration signed at Pillnitz the two Powers have pledged themselves to prevent the French Constitution from being established. There are certainly points," she adds, "on which the Powers have a right to speak, but every nation is its own master to adopt what internal laws it thinks fit. The sovereigns have done

¹ See Manifesto quoted in *Moniteur*, vol. ix. p. 733.

wrong to ignore this, and every one will attribute their action to the influences of the princes.”¹

Now, to have the Declaration imputed to their influence was exactly what the princes wished, and was also exactly what was most fatal to the king. In this same month of September, Marie-Antoinette sent a long memorandum to Leopold, suggesting the line of action by which alone, he and the Powers could render effectual aid to the king. To civil war the king continued determinedly opposed, and a foreign invasion would, she asserts, bring civil war, “and rather than such a calamity Louis would sacrifice crown and life itself.” But the question whether France should be a Monarchy or a Republic could not be indifferent to Europe, nor could the large addition made to the fighting forces of France by the institution of the National Guard; nor could Europe see without uneasiness the spreading of revolutionary principles. To protest against these things let a Congress, composed of representatives of the Powers and backed by a formidable show of force, demand a faithful execution of treaties existing between France and other countries; let it insist that Frenchmen who try to incite rebellion abroad shall be given up to justice, and that the Powers refuse to recognise the tricolour flag wherever it is a sign of

¹ Rocheterie et Beaucourt, *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 305.

sedition. At the same time let the Congress clearly state that it has no wish to interfere in anything which does not concern the relation of France to other nations, but in such matters let it insist on treating with the king and with him alone. This, urged the queen, would restore the king to his proper position and would give his faithful subjects an opportunity of supporting his claim to be again a governing power in France.¹

To this plan, with slight modifications, Louis and Marie-Antoinette steadily adhered. But the only chance of its being useful to them depended on France believing that the Powers acted on their own initiative and that the Congress had not been suggested by the Tuileries. This chance the princes did all in their power to destroy.

Writing to Louis on September 10th, they told him that "if he signed a Constitution which he in his heart rejected, they would in the most solemn manner protest before all the world against his act. It mattered not whether he expressly forbade their doing so. No order would prevent their taking the course their conscience dictated, for they obeyed the true commands of their sovereign in disobeying his extorted prohibition."²

A few days later, Condé, addressing the officers of his camp, declared that the princes would not

¹ *Recueil des lettres authentiques de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 284.

² *Moniteur du 23 sep. 1791* gives the princes' letter in full.

return to France except on the condition of the re-establishment of the nobility and of all its prerogatives. They did not ask for the old regime, but they asked that the king should resume his old authority, the Church her first splendour, and that the Assembly should consist of two Chambers.¹

Meantime, by Louis' acceptance of the Constitution, the Emperor held himself relieved from responsibility concerning France. He therefore formally recognised the Constitution and wrote to all the Powers whom he had invited to the Congress, saying that in the present circumstances there was no immediate need of their meeting. But the Declaration of Pellnitz had been made and the princes had spoken in no uncertain tone, and neither those who were content to preserve and modify what the Revolution had gained nor those who were intent on its gaining more, could afford to disregard foreign politics.

Thus it was that the question of peace or war presently became the absorbing question of the Legislative Assembly, of the clubs, and people of Paris, and that the external relations of France with Austria and the *émigrés* replaced the making of the Constitution in the minds of men.

By the 8th of October the new Assembly had completed its preliminary business, taken its oath

¹ *Chronique de Paris du 24 sep. 1791.*

and received the first visit of the king ; on the 20th it began its first great debate on the *émigrés*. Already the king had issued a proclamation inviting the *émigrés* to take advantage of the amnesty of September 13th and return to France, and had written to his brothers praying them to do the same.

By thus taking the initiative, Louis hoped to prevent action on the part of the Assembly, but in vain, and on October 31st a decree was voted by which Monsieur was required to return to France or lose his right of regency. On the 9th of November, by a second decree, the *émigrés* assembled beyond the frontier, were declared "suspect" of plotting against the country and if on the 1st of January 1792 they were still so assembled they would be considered guilty, their property confiscated and they themselves rendered liable to punishment by death.

This decree was sent at once to the king and his sanction asked for without delay. Louis refused, and the Jacobins pointed a moral. "This act of royal authority," wrote Prudhomme on the 12th of November, "destroys all hope of public order and tranquillity, but if we are attacked, let us make light of Louis XVI. and his veto, let us defend ourselves with the courage of those people who are happy enough to have no king."¹

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 123.

On November 29th the Assembly followed up its decree of November 9th by another which put the king in still greater difficulty. Severe as was the decree against the *émigrés*, it was directed against a definite offence; that of the 29th was directed against the non-juring priests, whose crime was obedience to conscience. True, some of these men did incite the people against the Revolution, but the decree did not confine itself to such, but made the refusal of the civil oath in itself a political crime. By it the non-juring priests were offered another opportunity of conforming, failing which they would be deprived of the pension allowed them on losing their cures, and it rendered them liable to be sent from their homes should any disturbance arise in their neighbourhood which could be attributed to religion.

This was an act of persecution and a political mistake, for it alienated a large body of the people from the Revolution, and it identified the cause of the Catholic Religion with that of the *émigrés*. Henceforth the princes posed as the champions of an oppressed clergy, many of whom took refuge under their standard.

Just about this time changes occurred in the ministry which had an important bearing on after events, and further increased the difficulties of the king. At the end of October, Montmorin,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, who since the death of Mirabeau had lost heart, resigned office, and at the beginning of December, Duportail, Minister of War, followed his example. Montmorin was replaced by de Lessart, already Minister of the Interior, a man without great ability, and who, disliked by the Assembly, was quite unable to cope with the difficulties of his post. Very different was Louis de Narbonne, who succeeded to the portfolio of War. One of a set of young nobles who wished to see the Crown recover something of its ancient prestige, he believed that a short and brilliant campaign against the *émigrés* would best conduce to re-establish the discipline of the army and to place the king in a position to intimidate and master the political clubs whose influence ruled the Assembly. He therefore desired war, while his colleagues, Duport du Tertre, still Minister of Justice, Tarbé, Minister of Finance, Cahier de Gerville, the new Minister of the Interior, and de Lessart wished if possible to preserve peace.

Now the debates on the *émigrés* had brought about, or at least had revealed a cleavage in the Left. Agreed that the Revolution must be permitted to work out its own salvation unhampered by conditions from without, the deputies of the Left disagreed as to the best way of securing their common end. The extreme party among the Jacobins, with Robespierre at their head, wished to see the *émigrés* anni-

hilated by severe decrees, and dreaded war lest it should strengthen the executive and so delay the coming of a Republic; the less extreme, known afterwards as the Girondins, preached war as the best method of consolidating the Revolution and of spreading its principles among the nations.¹ This party was stronger in the Assembly than the more extreme; it numbered Brissot, of the *Patriote français*, Vergniaud, Gensonné and Guadet, was backed by strong public opinion and had powerful organs in the press.

To this party, though opposed to its tenets, Narbonne found it convenient to ally himself, while the other ministers, with one notable exception, professed themselves Feuillants. The exception was Bertrand de Molleville, appointed Minister of the Marine on October 4th. An ardent Royalist, he was one of the little group of statesmen and diplomatists known as the Austrian Committee. This group was accused by the Jacobins of sacrificing French to Austrian interests, of urging the king to provoke Austria to declare war, and was held up to execration as the source of all the evils which disturbed France. Its leaders were Montmorin, the Comte de Mercy, the Comte de la Marck, and Bertrand de Molleville. That these men did consult together and did try to influence Austria to support the claims of

¹ See Pétion, *Pièces intéressantes pour l'histoire*, vol. iv. p. 118 note.

a French Monarchy is true, but that they did so from any but patriotic motives seems thoroughly disproved. Whether their patriotism was wise is another question.

Such then was the state of affairs in the autumn of 1791. The cloud of war was gathering, the king's council was divided, and the representatives of the nation were splitting into factions which were to sacrifice national interests to party ends.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DECLARATION OF WAR.



ROLAND.

THE protection afforded by the German Electors, as has been already said, first gave political importance to Artois, Condé and their followers. It was this same protection which now offered Narbonne and the Girondist party a pretext for war. On the 29th of November, the

same day as that on which the Assembly voted the decree against the non-juring priests, it asked the king to write to the Elector of Trèves and insist on his dispersing the *émigrés* congregated on his territory.

Determined not to sanction the decree against the priests, Louis was less unwilling to take action against the *émigrés*. He had already warned them

by a second proclamation that although he refused to sanction the law of November 9th which decreed them traitors, he was resolved "to defend the integrity of the Empire by every means which circumstances require."¹ Accordingly Louis went to the Assembly on December 14th and told it that he had informed the Elector of Trèves that unless the *émigrés* were dispersed by January 15th, France would consider him an enemy.

The Elector of Trèves at once complied with the demands of France; the *émigrés* were expelled from his dominions, in the depth of winter, and forced to find what refuge they could. But the action of France had impelled Austria to promise help to the Elector should France continue to threaten him, and it was known, or at least suspected, that the king was urging on Austria an armed Congress which was to mediate between the sovereign and his subjects.² On the 14th of January the Assembly, in wild enthusiasm, passed a law which made it a crime of *lèse-nation* to take part directly or indirectly in any Congress whose object was to modify the Constitution; in any mediation between the nation and the "rebels," or in any composition with the German Princes holding possessions in Alsace. On the 25th the Assembly went further and decreed

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xxxv. p. 103.

² See Sorel, A. *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, vol. ii. p. 344 seq.

that unless the Emperor by March 1st renounced all hostile intentions and acts against the sovereignty and independence of the French nation, it would declare war.¹

When the Emperor received official notice of these decrees he is said to have exclaimed, "The French wish for war and they shall have it; they shall see that Leopold the pacific knows how to wage it, if wage it he must."² But while negotiations were still pending Leopold the pacific died suddenly at Vienna on March the 1st, and before the news could reach the Tuileries fresh trouble had arisen in Paris. On the 9th of March Louis dismissed Narbonne, whose intriguing with the Girondists was objected to by his colleagues, and on the 10th de Lessart, accused in his turn by the Assembly of culpable slackness in his negotiations with Austria, was sent for trial to the newly-instituted Supreme Court of Justice at Orléans. At this the other ministers resigned. With the death of Leopold ended all hope of a European Congress, and with the change of ministry all prospect of pacific diplomacy. Francis II., who succeeded his father, had little influence with the Powers, and the new ministry was Girondist.³

¹ *Coll. gen. des décrets de l'assemblée législative.*

² Bourgoing, *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe*, vol. i. p. 451.

³ See on Legislative Assembly and the ministers. Masson, F., *Le département des affaires étrangères pendant la révolution.*

In the discussion on the accusation of de Lessart which took place before the resignation of the ministers, words had been uttered which threatened the queen. "I see," exclaimed Vergniaud, "from this *tribune* the windows of a palace where perverse counsellors lead astray and deceive our Constitution-given king, where they forge the irons with which they would bind us, and prepare the plots by which they would deliver us to the house of Austria. In olden days terror and consternation have often issued from that palace in the name of despotism, let them enter it to-day in the name of the law. Let all those who dwell there know that by our Constitution the person of the king is alone inviolable. Let them know that not one head there, proved criminal, shall escape the sword."¹ A report of these words was carried to the palace and Marie-Antoinette understood their import; hers was the head which, if proved criminal, the Left threatened with the sword.

It was therefore prudent to propitiate the Left, and Louis chose his new ministry with this in view. To the Interior, Finance, Justice and the Marine, Louis appointed Roland, Clavière, Duranton, and Lacoste. These men were all followers of Brissot, the acknowledged head of the war or Girondist party, but only one of them, Roland "the

¹ *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xxxix. p. 340.

virtuous," had any pretension to fame. De Graves, a man without influence and who speedily abandoned a task for which he was unfit, was made Minister of War, and Dumouriez who had earned a reputation both as a general and a diplomatist, became Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Of all the ministers that had blessed or cursed France since the beginning of the Revolution, Dumouriez was the ablest. But he hated Austria, wished to see her alliance with France destroyed, and was bent on attacking her. "I could almost venture to assert that there will not be war unless we declare it,"¹ wrote the French Ambassador at the Austrian Court in January 1792, and with Dumouriez' accession to power his prophecy became a certainty. On the 18th of March the new Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote a haughty letter to Vienna. Austria replied with equal hauteur. On the 27th, Dumouriez sent his ultimatum;—France would yield nothing, and required complete satisfaction on the points at issue by April 15th.

The ultimatum reached Vienna on the 5th of April, and late in the night of the 14th Dumouriez received the reply. It was a curt refusal. A Council was called, and on the 19th Dumouriez went to the Assembly, read the Austrian despatches, and announced a visit of the king next day. On the

¹ Sorel A, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii. p. 356.

morning of the 20th the *tribunes* of the Salle du Manège were crowded with a more fashionable audience than usual; at twelve the king arrived and took his place to the left of the President. Dumouriez read the resolution adopted by the Council. Then Louis, with no sign of feeling, with a "mixture of dignity and indifference,"¹ rose, and in accordance with the law which reserved to the Assembly the right of declaring war, announced that he considered there was cause for it to do so now. The alliance with Austria was broken.

Almost at the same time the French court lost its chivalrous if imprudent supporter—Gustave of Sweden. On the 10th of March, Gustave had been stabbed in his capital, and on the 27th he died. "Who knows," said Marie-Antoinette when she heard the news, "that our fate may not be the same?"² while Louis owned to a settled expectation of assassination.³ Events were indeed pressing hard upon the king and queen, and their one hope—that Austria might succeed in reducing France to a submission—was a very dangerous one. France was wildly excited, even the women asked to be drilled, and it behoved the king's advisers to be

¹ Madame de Staël, quoted by Sorel, vol. ii. p. 431.

² Tourzel, Madame de, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 73.

³ Bertrand de Moleville, *Mémoires particuliers*, vol. i. p. 219.

careful. If the king showed sympathy with the invaders, woe betide him !

On one point Louis and his so-called Austrian Committee were clear; if the intervention of Austria¹ was to be acceptable to the French people, Austria and her allies must be distinguished from the *émigrés*. Accordingly they proposed to send Mallet du Pan, a Genevese royalist, on a secret mission. He was to persuade the *émigrés* to keep aloof from Austria, and to advise Austria to publish a proclamation declaring that her quarrel was not with France, but only with the "criminal faction," which oppressed king and nation alike; that all she desired was to restore the king's authority by establishing a monarchy limited by law, as the king himself wished it to be.² In proposing such a plan, the royal counsellors depended on the sympathy of the large body of men tired of disturbance and contest, who hated the Jacobins, and would welcome, as was believed, a strong but limited monarchy. They forgot, as M. Sorel puts it, "the boundless optimism of France, they forgot that the French regarded the king as over-borne by his advisers—the queen as hostile, the nobles as implacable, and Austria as an enemy—and they asked the nation to entrust this enemy with

¹ Although France had as yet only declared war against Austria, Prussia being an ally of Austria prepared to fight with her.

² Cf. Bertrand de Moleville, *Mémoires particuliers*, vol. i. p. 371 and Mallet du Pan, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 280.

the founding of a temperate monarchy ; they asked it to have confidence in a monarch whose will and capacity had always fallen short of his best intentions ; to choose between men who had on their side the prestige of the Revolution, and the return to power of a discredited government. To admit that the nation would hesitate for a moment between these alternatives was to misunderstand the strength of the Revolution—to misunderstand the history of France.”¹

France chose war and entered on it with enthusiasm. The French forces were divided into three armies, that of the north in two divisions under the Marshals Rochambeau and Luckner ; that of the centre under Lafayette, and that of the south under Montesquiou. Before April was over an attack was planned by the northern army on the two Belgian towns of Tournay and Mons, under the command of the two generals Dillon and Biron. Belgium had professed sympathy with the Revolution, was still Austrian territory, and had herself been engaged in rebellion against the Emperor. The war-party believed that French troops had only to cross the frontier for the people to rise and join “ the crusade of liberty,” for “ let our war be against kings,” said Condorcet, “ let it mean peace with their people.”²

¹ Sorel, A., *L'Europe et la révolution française*, vol. ii. p. 475.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xxxv. p. 103.

The hope was cruelly disappointed. On the 3rd of May Paris heard that both generals had been completely routed, and next day that Dillon, accused of treachery by his own troops, had been brutally murdered. Belgium did not rise, and the French officers themselves acknowledged that they had been profoundly deceived as to the disposition of the inhabitants of the Low Countries towards France.¹ "The truth is," says M. Sorel, "that if the dwellers on the Rhine indulged in bursts of admiration for the Revolution, they had no intention of imitating it."²

The news of the defeat was a shock, it "stunned even the Jacobins," but it did not shake the determination of the people. Contributions to war expenses were brought daily to the National Assembly; gifts from the pupils of private schools, from the young girls of the sections, from the choir-boys of different parishes; gold watches, spoons and forks, silver buttons, and even knitting needles were laid on the altar of the country.³

In the midst of the anxiety which followed the first reverses of the war, de Graves resigned and was replaced by Servan, a Republican, an adherent of Roland, and a hard-working minister. With him came a renewal of energy in the War Office, and for this

¹ See Browning, O, *Lord Gower's Despatches*, p. 180 seq.

² Sorel, A, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, p. 473.

³ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlv. p. 5 seq.

there was abundant need. The army was disorganised, officers were unwilling to fight for revolutionary principles and the gravity of the task on which France had embarked was becoming daily more apparent.

It was Dumouriez' aim to isolate Austria from the other European powers, and to this end he endeavoured to secure a friendly neutrality, if he could not secure more, on the part of both England and Prussia. But England persevered in a non-committal policy, and the King of Prussia held by his newly-made ally. It was clear that France must soon find herself at war with two enemies instead of one, and by the end of May news came that Austria meant to invade France and march upon the Capital. To all this was added the knowledge that a secret emissary had been sent from the Tuileries to Austria and the French princes, and it was rumoured that on the night of the 22nd May, the king meant to fly a second time from Paris.

In vain Louis wrote to the Municipality indignantly denying any thought of flight. "You know," he said, "that the rumour is a new and horrible calumny intended to excite the people . . . when France is threatened from within and from without my place is in the capital."¹ In vain the Depart-

¹One of the printed bills containing this letter is in the Bibliothèque Carnavalet.

ment printed and placarded the king's denial. On the 23rd Brissot and Gensonné denounced the plots of the Austrian committee and proposed to send Montmorin for trial to Orléans. On the 29th the Assembly, "considering that an un-citizen like spirit characterises the king's guard, and that the conduct of its officers excites alarm for his safety,"¹ decided that it should be disbanded and that a detachment of the National Guard of Paris should perform its service.

The decree was voted late at night; early next morning the king called his Council and told them he meant to refuse his sanction, but no minister would counter-sign his declaration, and Louis yielded.²

These were not the only measures. On the 26th of May, on the plea of disturbance in the country caused by non-juring clergy, "men who forgot they belonged to their country, and pretended instead that they belonged to God,"³ the Assembly decreed that if twenty "active citizens" of one canton demanded the exile of a non-juring priest, the Department, unless it could show good reason for its refusal, must order the offender to leave his district within twenty-four hours, his department within

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xliv. p. 305.

² Bertrand de Moleville, *Mémoires particuliers*, vol. ii. p. 10.

³ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xliii. p. 22.

three days, and the kingdom within one month, on pain of ten years' imprisonment.

Lastly, on June 4th, Servan proposed and on the 8th the Assembly voted that a camp of twenty thousand men should be formed outside the walls of Paris. The third anniversary of the taking of the Bastille was drawing near. There had been no great celebration of the second, for in 1791 men were absorbed by the flight and fate of the king, but this year the Jacobins could lose no opportunity of fostering patriotism. It was therefore proposed that each canton should be asked to send five representatives of its National Guard to take part in the federation of July, and it was these men whom Servan wished to keep after the *fête* in a camp outside the walls of Paris, for the protection of the city and the safeguard of the king.

Now neither the decree of May 26th or of June 8th met with general acceptance. That against the priests was only voted after a long and stormy debate in which the Assembly was accused of wishing to abolish religion and of infringing liberty of conscience. At length, taking refuge in Rousseau's theory of a "Social Contract," it had declared "that men who sought to dissolve Society could not themselves be regarded as members of Society,"¹ but it overlooked the

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xliv. p. 168. *Préambule au décret sur les prêtres perturbateurs.*

tremendous power for strife, faction and local disturbance given by the decree to irresponsible and often quite illiterate men. To this decree the king declined an immediate sanction.

Again, the camp of twenty thousand men to be gathered from all parts of the country—"twenty thousand brigands chosen in the clubs"¹—was opposed not only by the court party but by the National Guard of Paris, who, hurt by expressions in Servan's speech, got up an unofficial petition against the proposal, as did eight thousand citizens of the quiet middle class. In these circumstances, Louis asked his ministers to give him their separate written opinions on the question, before he decided whether to sanction the decree or not.

Some weeks before, Roland and his intrepid wife, taking counsel together, had agreed that the king must be urged to more decisive action, that he must in short be told the truth, as it was in Girondist eyes. They accordingly drafted a letter which they tried, but tried in vain, to induce the other ministers to sign. "Then," says Madame Roland, "it behoved the one man who felt himself superior to events, to act alone,"² and without her husband's aid, though with his approval, she composed a second and very famous

¹ Bâcourt, *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck*, vol. iii. p. 312. Montmorin à la Marck.

² Ravenel, *Mémoires de Madame Roland*, p. 298.

letter. It was not a usual letter for a monarch to receive. It pointed out the horrors which the king's advisers were about to bring upon France ; it accused Louis of blindness, it told him that the stern language of truth was seldom welcome near a throne, and it asserted that the confidence of the people could not be gained by protesting, and that France would no longer be content without deeds. "If the decrees are not sanctioned, the people will regard the king as the friend and accomplice of conspirators."¹

This letter, sent to the king as an answer to his request, reflected the feeling of the clubs and did contain very real truths, but they were unsoftened by a single respectful expression. Louis read it as an order from a servant to a sovereign. "It is too much," he exclaimed, and next day, June 12th, Roland, Servan, and Clavière, the three "patriot" ministers, were dismissed. The decrees were not sanctioned, and because they were not, Louis, as we shall see, was held a traitor from whom the Jacobins were bound to deliver France.

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlv. p. 464 for letter in full.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE COMMUNE.



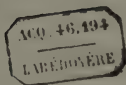
VERGNIAUD.

IF one compares the position of the democratic party in the early summer of 1792 with that of 1791, one is amazed at the difference. In 1791 France was a monarchical country a little distrustful of her king. The ministers, the National Assembly and the Municipality

of Paris were constitutional in policy. The Jacobin Club was powerful, but was leavened by a large number of moderate men. The struggle was between the upholders of the Constitution and the supporters of the old regime, Democrats were a minority, and Republicans were units.

In 1792 France was a country at the mercy of factions, of which the strongest was openly demo-

3071
Fête des soldats — 27
Château vieux

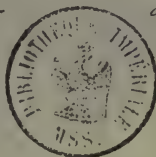


bourgeois

Doffe

La force —

Union —



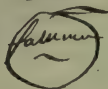
vaillant

La vertu —

La prudence —

invalides

Liberté



La patience —
La justice —

général

La victoire —

général

Abondance —

Liberté

vétérans

FÊTE DU CHÂTEAU VIEUX.

Rough sketch found in the Bibliothèque nationale (MSS. Fr. nouv. acq. 308) of the placing of procession on the Champ de Mars with allegorical names given to each division.



cratic. The ministers were "patriots," those deputies with whom lay the strength of the Assembly, were enemies to kings, and the Jacobin Club, freed from the restraint of the men who left it to join the Feuillants, was the unthroned sovereign of Paris, with the sections and Municipality fulfilling its word. "All enlightenment comes from the Jacobin Club, whoso denies this is a heretic, whoso bows not the knee to our Lords the Jacobins must be struck off from the number of the living." . . . 'Who will carry out the law?' 'The Jacobins!' 'Who will direct the reason and conscience of the deputies?' 'The question is a foolish one,—of course the Jacobins!' 'Who will administer the details of the law, will the Municipality?' 'Aristocrat, what say you? without doubt, the Jacobins,'"¹ and the prophecy had come true.

There was still, however, one authority left in Paris more or less constitutional in its sympathies, and this was the Directory of the Department. It will be remembered that by the law of December 22nd, 1789, France had been divided into departments, districts, and cantons, while towns were governed by municipalities under the supervision of the departments. But just as Paris in 1789 was considered too large to be included in a *bailliage*,

¹ B. M. P., *Club des Jacobins*. F.R., 366, *Petit Catéchisme patriotique à l'usage des pauvres d'esprit*.

and was made an electoral district of her own, so in this case also she was made a department with a radius extending for three leagues in every direction from Notre Dame. Now, until the new law came into operation, the Municipality or Commune of Paris, as it was henceforth generally called, was the highest administrative body in the capital, and was responsible for the public order of the city. But so soon as the Department was organised the Commune was subordinated to it in all that concerned the maintenance of public order and security.¹

For a time the two bodies worked well together, but by degrees friction arose. The substitution in 1790 of forty-eight sections for the sixty electoral districts of Paris, the resignation of Bailly as Mayor, and the election of the democrat Pétion in his stead in November, 1791, the appointment of Danton as a Substitute-Procurator of the Commune, and the renewal according to law of half the members of the Municipality, all tended to make the Commune of Paris more and more revolutionary in its sympathies. It was because the districts had assumed so independent a position that they were broken up into sections, but the sections were larger and proved even more revolutionary and more determined to dominate the Municipality than the districts, while the new councillors, men of a less good social

¹ Schmidt, A., *Tableaux de la révolution française*, vol. i. p. 8.

position than those whom they replaced, were more imbued with republican ideas.¹ Thus it came to pass that in the summer of 1792 the Department and the Commune were no longer at one; and with the dismissal of the "patriot" ministers began a struggle between the constituted authorities in Paris, which only ended with the downfall of the throne of France.

Now among the means employed by the Jacobins to educate the people to their views were popular demonstrations or *fêtes*. "In free States, where the people is sovereign, the one object of a *fête* is to honour the people and to teach the citizens virtue; that is, love of their country and of liberty."² In the first half of the year 1792 this lesson was duly impressed upon the Parisians. During three months, from the middle of April to the middle of July, four great *fêtes* took place in the capital. Of these, three were organised by the Jacobins and "taught liberty" as understood by them, while one, planned by the Constitutionalists, was an attempt at an antidote.

In September 1790, as may be remembered, forty soldiers engaged in the rebellion of Nancy were condemned to thirty years' service in the galleys at Brest, and when in September 1791 a general amnesty was decreed in honour of the king's

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. i. p. 45.

² Robespierre in his *Défenseur de la Constitution*, No. 4.

acceptance of the Constitution, these men were excluded. Their cause was immediately taken up by the Jacobins, who eventually succeeded in gaining their pardon. The patriotic societies hailed their release as a great event, and crowned with favours, fêted by the Jacobin Clubs and proclaimed by them "martyrs to liberty," the forty soldiers walked in triumph from Brest to Paris, where, on April 15th, a demonstration called the "*fête de la liberté*, or triumph of the long-oppressed" took place in their honour. Men carrying busts of Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin, and our English Sidney, headed the procession, and in its midst was borne the Act of the Constitution, and the Table of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. A huge statue of Liberty, incense burning before her, a *bonnet rouge* in her right hand, a club in her left, and a broken yoke under her feet—was borne on a car drawn by twenty-four white horses, while a figure of Fame held over her the words "France is free." As if to point the moral, the car of Liberty was preceded by another in the shape of a galley, in which sat forty maidens holding the chains worn in their servitude by the "martyrs" who walked in front. Their destination was the Champ de Mars, where Pétion as Mayor was to lay the Act of the Constitution on the altar of the country. The Commune of Paris, representatives from the forty-eight sections, the patriotic

societies, and a number of the deputies took part in this *fête* of the Châteaueux, intended to teach the people the love of liberty.¹ The Department looked on in cold displeasure.

On the 3rd of June another *fête* was held in the capital. This time it was in honour of law. Bread was still dear, and riots took place only too frequently. In the month of March a band of men who went about declaiming against the price of corn incited the people of Étampes to demand an illegal lowering of its price. For seven hours their Mayor, Simonneau, resisted the demand and then called out the military. "Will you lower the price of corn?" the people cried. "I cannot, it is against the law," and assailed by balls and blows Simonneau fell dead.²

Here, then, was a martyr more worthy of honour than the insurgent soldiers of Nancy, and Bertrand de Moleville tells us how the idea was mooted of holding a *fête* in honour of Simonneau, which should also be one in honour of law, and thus "counteract in some measure the disastrous effect of that of the Châteaueux."³ On the 3rd of June this *fête* was held. The statue of Liberty was replaced by one of Law; a large deputation from the National Assembly, the magistrates, public officials and National Guard formed the procession, but the

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. i. p. 74 *seq.* ² *Id.* p. 88.

³ Bertrand de Moleville, *Mémoires particuliers*, vol. ii. p. 78.

Jacobins were absent and the people had no part in the pageant. "The effect," says de Moleville, "was but momentary." To succeed, as the king himself allowed, a *fête* must have the support of the Municipality and sections.¹

Fêtes were in fashion just then, and the 20th of June was the anniversary of the oath of the Jeu de Paume. For some time the "agitators of the faubourgs" had been preparing to celebrate the day by a popular demonstration, in which the citizens, wearing the dress and carrying the arms they wore and carried in the stormy days of 1789, should plant a "tree of liberty" on the Terrace of the Feuillants and afterwards present an address to the National Assembly and to the king. But when the Girondist ministers were dismissed the *fête* assumed another and more threatening aspect. On the 15th of June its organisers met and drafted their address to the Assembly. "The dismissal of the patriot ministers," they said, "proves that the executive is not acting in concert with you. Therefore the executive acts by caprice. Is a king to have any will but that of the law? One single man must not dominate the will of twenty-five millions. *If we keep him in his post* it is on condition that he fills it constitutionally."² Having

¹ Bertrand de Moleville, *Mémoires particuliers*, vol. ii. p. 79.

² Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. i. p. 175.

drafted their address the leaders next applied to the Commune for leave to carry out their programme. Now the law expressly forbade the carrying of arms by any gathering of citizens not a part of the regularly constituted forces, and the Council of the Commune in the absence of the Mayor, refused the request. The petitioners retired indignant.

Meantime on June 18th an incident occurred which made the Jacobins and their supporters more determined than ever to carry out their purpose. On that day a letter was read in the Salle du Manège from Lafayette, who, hearing in his camp near Maubeuge of the dismissal of the Girondists, and rejoicing greatly,¹ wrote to the Assembly congratulating France on the removal of the "patriots" and denouncing the Jacobin Club as the real source of the disorders from which the country suffered. "Blindly led by a few ambitious chiefs, this sect, with its mother society and affiliated branches, forms a separate body in the midst of the French people, whose power it usurps by dominating its representatives. It is there, in its public sittings, that love of the laws is called aristocracy, and their infraction patriotism."² At the same time

¹ Rœderer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours*, p. 9.

² Rœderer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours*, p. 10 seq. Rœderer was Procurator of the Department and his account of the events from June 20th to August 10th is one of the most reliable.

Lafayette sent the king a copy of what he had written to the Assembly, with a letter full of expressions of loyalty and respect. Next day the king gave formal notice of his refusal to sanction the decrees.

The popular ministers dismissed, Lafayette publicly denouncing the Jacobins and demanding the closing of their club, the king exercising the hated veto; what wonder that the organisers of the *fête* were determined not to give way? It was the easier for them to persist because they knew that Pétion was at heart in sympathy with them, and because Danton was a Procurator-Substitute of the Commune. The Commune, therefore, was not a power greatly to be feared. It was different with the Directory of the Department. That body was persuaded that the presenting of petitions was but a pretext for an armed demonstration which should threaten the king, but although a higher administrative authority than the Commune it belonged to the latter to issue the actual orders to the troops for securing the peace of the city.¹ All that the Department could do it did, but the 19th came and no definite orders had been issued by the Hôtel de Ville. Growing more and more anxious, the Department insisted that the Mayor should instruct Romainvilliers, then Commandant of the National

¹ See p. 208.

Guard,¹ to double the posts at the Tuileries and National Assembly, and, if necessary, to call out the regular troops.

Late that evening Pétion consulted the officers of the National Guard in the excited districts, and heard them declare that nothing would stop the people. The Mayor could not, in the face of the law, sanction the *fête*; he did not wish to prevent it, and therefore adopted a suggestion that, by his own presence, and that of the municipal officers and of the National Guard, he should give the procession a law-abiding character. This proposal he sent to the Procurator of the Department early on the morning of the 20th, and then went to bed. The Department met in haste, but refused to make a "composition with the law" and held to their refusal, despite a second and very urgent message from the Mayor. It was then between five and six o'clock in the morning. In obedience to the Department, Pétion sent to the officers of the National Guard and told them that they must not accompany the people, but he took no measures to prevent the people from carrying out their design, and about mid-day the petitioners set out.

In two great bands, one starting from the south of

¹ In October 1791, Lafayette retired from the National Guard, its organisation was changed and the Commandant-General replaced by twelve *chefs de légion* who commanded in turn.

the Seine, and the other from the Bastille, they marched to the Salle du Manège. There the petition was read, and despite the laws, the mob was permitted to file past the President and through the hall, bearing their arms. From the Assembly they went to the king. The Tuileries was guarded, but Romainvilliers, either unable or unwilling to take resolute action, did nothing to stop the mob, and allowed the insurgent battalion of Val-de-Grâce, belonging to the Faubourg Saint-Marceau to threaten the palace with its guns. At this the palace gates were opened from within, the mob forced the inner doors, and found themselves in the presence of the king.

Historians differ as to the character of this mob. Revolutionary writers describe it as a gay and joyous assemblage. "It was not," says the *Révolutions de Paris*, "a mob; it was the people of the first city in the world filled with the love of liberty and penetrated by respect for the law."¹ The petitioners described themselves as "twenty thousand industrious and estimable citizens . . . received graciously by the king;"² and when we read of pleasure parties setting out to ride in the Bois de Boulogne, of an English lady driving into the Carrousel to see for herself "the indescribable scene" going on there and of her maid following

¹ *Révolutions de Paris*, 17-23 juin 1792.

² *Affiche* in Bib. Carnavalet, *Les Citoyens de Paris aux Soldats*.

a "*députation à piques*" into the palace,¹ one cannot but think that royalist writers have exaggerated the horrors of the day. Yet the revolutionary historians themselves allow that the men who surrounded and pressed upon the king were armed with pikes, scythes, forks, bill-hooks, saws, and knives fastened to sticks. Even if these were carried with pacific intention and in memory of July 1789, they formed a somewhat prickly setting to the Table of the Declaration of Rights which was planted before the king, a somewhat threatening accompaniment to cries of "Sanction the decrees," "Recall the patriot ministers," "Choose between Paris and Coblenz!"²

Louis stood the ordeal well. For several hours the people thronged the palace. He met them with calmness and good-humour, and yielded nothing to their threats. "I will do what the Constitution and decrees demand," he said in answer to the petition read. Marie-Antoinette and Madame Elisabeth behaved with a like princely courage. At length, after urgent messages reporting the state of things at the Tuileries, Pétion arrived on the scene. He persuaded the people to go home, telling them that they had "legally made their wishes known to the king with the

¹ Mrs Edward Standish. Letter written on June 20th, 1792.

² *Révolutions de Paris*, 17-23 juin 1792.

dignity and majesty of a free people.”¹ By eight o'clock the palace was cleared, and the *fête* of the 20th of June was over.

Not so its consequences. For the moment there was a reaction in favour of order. From the provinces, from the Parisians, from the army, came remonstrance on the doings of the day. The Department of the Somme, emphatic in its condemnation, offered to send two hundred of its own National Guard to Paris if that of the capital could not secure the safety of the king, and the liberty of the Assembly. A monster petition, called from the number of its signatures, the “Petition of the Twenty Thousand,” was drawn up by two deputies of the Constituent Assembly. It boldly enumerated the faults of the Commune and of the National Guard, and asked the representatives of the nation to keep strict watch over the Mayor, and to dismiss Romainvilliers. Finally, on June 28th Lafayette appeared at the bar of the Assembly, with a message from the officers, sub-officers and men of his army, expressing their indignation at the doings of the 20th, and with a demand in his own name for the prosecution of all those concerned, and “the destruction of a sect which usurps the sovereignty of the nation and tyrannises over the citizens.”²

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. i. p. 208.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlv. p. 653.

Thus the gauntlet was flung down, and the Constitutionalists carried menace into deeds. The Department had charged Romainvilliers, the Mayor, and Manuel, Procurator of the Commune, with culpable neglect, and now Lafayette was ready to offer his services to the Crown and was planning to induce the volunteers of the National Guard to rise against the Jacobin Clubs and close their doors.

The Jacobins accepted the challenge, and their first effort was to parry Lafayette's attack. "The Austrians then are defeated or in retreat, since Lafayette is here," said Guadet in bitter irony as the General sat down after reading his addresses, and he moved that the Minister of War be asked whether Lafayette had obtained leave to come to Paris, and that the *commission extraordinaire*¹ be requested to examine into and to report upon his conduct next morning. But a proposal that no message be sent to the Minister of War, and that the *commission* be not hurried in its report, obtained a majority of over a hundred votes.

Left free to act, Lafayette, in concert with the Staff of the National Guard, invited its volunteer battalions to meet him on the 29th at the Champs-

¹ A commission consisting of twelve members, appointed June 17th, 1792 "to examine into the condition of France and to take measures to save the Constitution."

Elysées, in order to make his proposal against the clubs. Only one hundred men appeared, and when next day the once popular General,—repulsed alike by the populace and the king,—turned his back on Paris, the people burned him in effigy at the Palais-Royal. But the Staff of the National Guard had shown Anti-Jacobin sympathies, and the Jacobins resolved to strike Lafayette through it. Accordingly, on July 6th, the Assembly voted a decree which obliged the immediate dissolution of the *états-majors* of the National Guard of Paris, and of all towns over fifty thousand inhabitants, and their re-election by the people. The Jacobin Clubs took care that the new officers should not be Feuillant in sympathy.

Their next attack was on the ministers, who, after the fall of the Girondists, had been chosen from the followers of Lafayette. They had now been in office for about a fortnight. France had met with fresh reverses, Servan's proposed camp was vetoed; what measures were they taking for the safety of the country? None that satisfied the leaders of the Assembly. Immediately after the disturbances of the 20th of June the ministers were summoned to the Salle du Manège. They appeared there on the 23rd and stood before the President, while a secretary read a decree of the Assembly ordering them to report at once on the state of

matters in their several departments. Next day they appeared again with the required reports, but the Assembly was dissatisfied, and asked to know within three days how the ministers proposed to put down the refractory priests and to secure the safety of Paris; in other words, what they meant to do in place of the decrees the king had vetoed. They replied that the king proposed to have a camp at Soissons which would be within easy reach both of Paris and the frontier, and that they would enforce existing laws concerning the priests, but could do no more.¹

This did not please the Jacobins, and on the 3rd of July Vergniaud, the greatest orator in the Assembly, hurled threats against the ministers. "Tell France," he exclaimed, "that henceforth the ministers will answer by their heads for all the disorders of which religion can be the pretext,"² and then in a passage of scathing irony revealed the opinion of his party regarding the king's relation to the Constitution.

"If," he asked, "France swims in blood, if civil war breaks out, if the foreigner prevails . . . what defence has the king?" And imagining Louis to speak for himself he replied, 'It is true that the enemies that tear France in pieces do so to restore the prerogatives they suppose me to have lost, but

¹ *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xlv. p. 502.

² *Le Logographe*, No. 23.

I am not their accomplice ; I have obeyed the Constitution, and have sent my armies to the field. It is true that these armies are too weak, but the Constitution does not say what their strength should be ; it is true that when my Generals advanced victoriously on the enemy's territory I ordered them to halt, but the Constitution does not ask me to achieve victories, it actually forbids me to make conquests. . . . It is true that I have kept those ministers that held back the progress of the Constitution, and sent away those that gave it freer play, but the Constitution has given me entire control over their dismissal, and nowhere has it said that I must give my confidence to patriots. It is true that the counter-revolution is being accomplished, that despotism will reinvest me with its rod of iron—that I shall punish you for having wished to be free, but since I have done all that the Constitution prescribes, since I have done no single act that the Constitution condemns, my fidelity towards it, my zeal in its defence no man may call in question.’”¹

Vergniaud followed up this declamation by proposing to send a firm, dignified, yet friendly address to the king, praying him to dissociate himself from his evil advisers ; he also moved that the National Assembly declare the country in danger, and the ministers responsible for the invasion of France.

¹ *Le Logographe*, No. 23 ; also Roederer, p. 152 *seq.*

Now, so far, France had only Austria and the *émigrés* as her opponents, but on the 6th of July, Louis wrote to the Assembly and announced that he saw with regret another enemy declaring itself, that Prussia was conspiring with Austria—her rival and natural enemy—against the Constitution of France. This was a fresh danger, and a fresh charge against the ministers; and on the 9th Brissot asked the Assembly to send Chambonas, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to be tried at Orléans for treason. Next day the ministry, in office for less than a month, resigned in a body.

So far Louis had chosen his ministers more or less with a view to pleasing the National Assembly. He chose his new, which was also his last ministry to please himself. The men who composed it were Royalists, they were devoted and conscientious, but they had no influence whatever in the Assembly, and were therefore no real support to the king.

A few days later, the king lost the support of the Department of Paris, for on the 7th of July, the Department had suspended Pétion and Manuel from office, and thus roused the passions of the capital. It was a question of the Feuillants against the Jacobins, and for several days Paris was in a ferment. "If the Mayor is guilty we all are, and we ask the honour of sharing his fate"¹ said the *corps municipal* in a

¹ Roederer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours*, p. 169.

petition to the Assembly. Petitions came too from the sections. They prayed the Assembly to dissolve the General Council of the Department; they even asked that its members be prosecuted for treason. "Citizens," said Pétion in a proclamation stuck on the walls of Paris, "I am suspended from my office! Receive the decision with the calm and self-possession with which I have received it. A superior power will pronounce upon it, and innocence will, I hope, be avenged." ¹

Now, though it was for the king to confirm or annul the suspension, the last word lay with the Assembly, and it was the superior power upon whom Pétion depended. Louis asked to be altogether relieved from a matter in which he was personally interested. "I demand," cried a deputy, "when he heard the request, that the Assembly pass to the order of the day and *compel* the executive to do its duty." ² The king therefore was forced to take action, and on July 13th decided in Council in favour of the Department; the same day the Assembly reversed the decision of the king and restored the Mayor to office. The Jacobins had won; the greater number of the Directory resigned, the Department ceased to be a power in Paris, and the Commune reigned supreme.

¹ Roederer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours*, p. 169.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlv. p. 236.

Thus Louis XVI. was left to face foreign invasion, internal division, the coming of the *fédérés*, aided only by a royalist ministry and unsupported by a moderate party. Lafayette, Feuillant ministers, the Department of Paris, one by one had failed; the throne, tottering to its fall, stood alone.

There was but one more act in the drama, and that was brought about by the coming of the men who were to take part in the last *fête* of the summer of 1792, the *Fête de la Fédération* of July 14th.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COMING OF THE *FÉDÉRÉS*.



ROBESPIERRE.

“GENTLEMEN,” said Hérault de Séchelles, reporter of the *commission extraordinaire* and the *comité diplomatique*, “for days scarce an orator has ended a speech without the words ‘the country is in danger.’ But the Assembly dared not decide on so grave a measure, the

gravest it has yet adopted, without calm consideration, and it is after long and anxious discussion that the Committees have agreed that the time is indeed come to declare ‘the country in danger.’”¹

This was on the 11th of July, three days before the *Fête de la Fédération*, and the announcement affected the character of the *fête*, or to be more accu-

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlv. p. 335.

rate, revealed the motive which had instigated the summoning of *fédérés* from all parts of the country.

“Greeting to the defenders of liberty, to the French of the eighty-three departments! Citizens, is it because of a mere ceremony that you are come? It is the cry of the ‘country in danger’ that has called you. The tyrants of France pretend to make war on their accomplices and allies, only that with their aid they may make war on the French people.

Generous citizens, last hope of the country, it is to you that France turns to prevent this. . . . Citizens, the country is in danger, the liberty of the world is at stake, until it is secure, your duty is not done.”¹

Such was Robespierre’s welcome to the men whom Servan had intended to utilise for his camp outside the walls. That camp the king had vetoed, and Terrier de Montciel, who replaced Roland as Minister of the Interior, had ordered the Departments to keep the men at home. But the Assembly decreed that the *fédérés* would be useful at the camp at Soissons, and authorised the Commune to find them quarters in Paris until July 18th, after which, the *fête* being over, they were supposed to leave Paris and repair to the camp. Their residence in the capital was thus legalised for a certain definite period, during which they received an allowance of thirty *sous* a-day. But this did not satisfy the Jacobins, for

¹ *Défenseur de la Constitution*, No. 9.

they wished to keep the *fédérés* in Paris, and they therefore organised a *comité central des fédérés* which at once entered into relations with several of the most revolutionary of the sections and issued the following instructions: "Arrived at the capital, or *en route* to it, the *fédérés* must not allow themselves to be separated, but must come *en masse* to Paris, and in spite of orders to the contrary must refuse to go to the camp at Soissons."¹ To prevent their suffering pecuniary loss by out-staying the authorised time the Jacobins offered to entertain them in their own houses, "for," wrote Robespierre, "your presence in Paris alone will be great gain to the public cause; your union with the patriots which the city contains will disconcert the plots of traitors."²

A little later, in an address to their comrades of the eighty-three departments, the *fédérés* announced their own intention of remaining in the capital. "Brothers and friends, we heard the cry of the country and we flew to her aid. Before coming we were led to believe that the country's gravest danger was not at the frontiers. What we see confirms us in that belief. It is from Paris that the secret council of the king commands the Austrian armies. . . . It is at Paris that we must conquer

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 106.

² *Défenseur de la Constitution*, No. 10.

or die—this is our post, the scene of our triumph or the place of our tomb.”¹ They had not come to take oaths of fidelity, although these were taken; they had come to deliver France from foreign invasion and from the secret advisers of the king. How they were going to do this was not yet clear.

Such being the spirit in which the *fédérés* arrived in Paris, and were welcomed by the Jacobins, we need not be surprised that the actual *fête* of July 14th passed quietly and was an incident of but slight importance in their eyes. Two things alone gave it significance. Early on the morning of the day, the first stone was laid of the column erected to commemorate the fall of the Bastille; and later, as the procession on the Champ de Mars passed before the balcony in which the king and royal family waited its arrival, a great shout of “*Pétion, Vive Pétion!*” rose from the crowd, while for Louis scarcely a voice was raised. Only the grenadiers escorting the royal carriage back to the Tuileries cried “*Vive le roi! vive la reine!*” “They were all heart and soul,” said Madame Elisabeth, “and it did us good.”²

The hearts of the royal family sorely needed encouragement. “There is not a day,” wrote Montmorin on July 13th, “that I do not tremble for the life of the king and queen, nor a night that I

¹ *Défenseur de la Constitution*, No. 10.

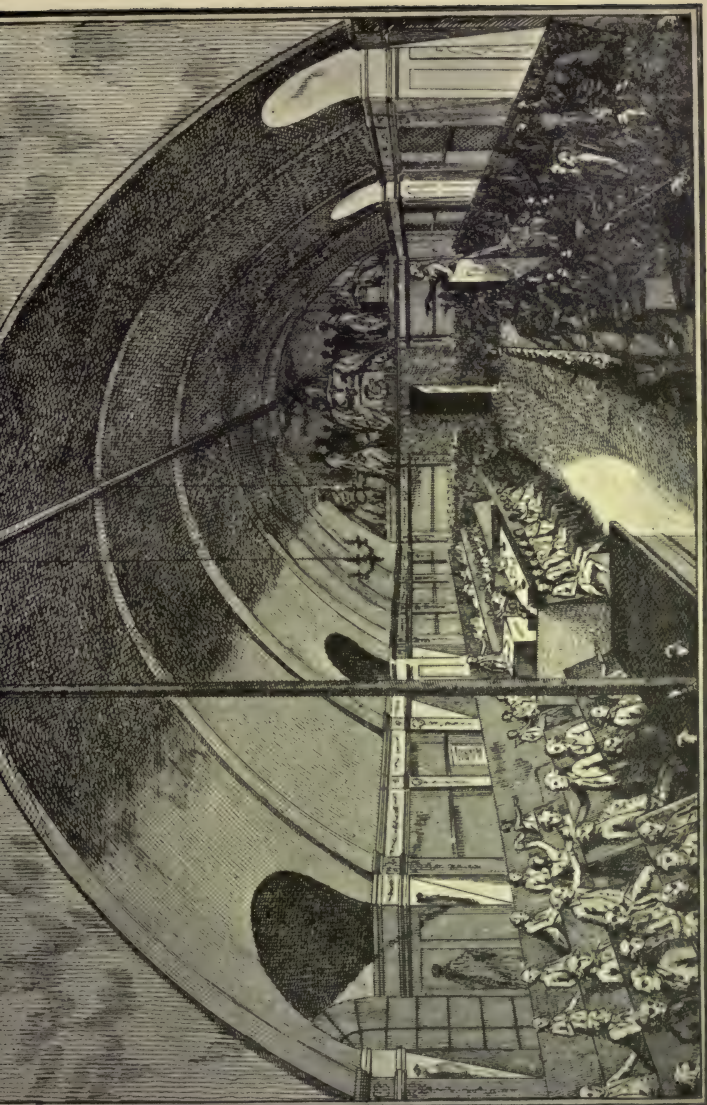
² *Correspondance de Mme. Elisabeth*, p. 425.

do not thank Providence that they still live." Plans of flight came from Lafayette, from the Duc de Liancourt, from Madame de Staël, but the day for flight was over. The danger was too great, and in any case the king and queen absolutely refused to leave Paris. "Whatever their danger," adds Montmorin, "I believe that they are right."¹

Meantime each day was increasing their peril, for not only was a dangerous element being introduced into the capital, but with the proclamation of the country in danger, moderate men were leaving it; order-loving citizens were enrolling for the frontiers, and three regiments of well-affected troops left Paris to join the army.

It is impossible here to dwell on the story of the heroic defence of the country undertaken and successfully achieved by the France of the Revolution. Suffice it to say that historians of all shades of opinion are constrained to pay tribute to the genuine patriotism, the dauntless courage, and the unflinching determination shown by the men of 1792 in face of a foreign enemy. Nor should it be forgotten, however one may condemn the extravagance, self-love and tyrannical proceedings of the Jacobins, that there were among them true-hearted citizens who believed, and not without provocation, that Monarchy as

¹ Bacourt, *Correspondance entre le comte de Mirabeau et le comte de la Marck*, vol. iii. p. 325, *lettre de Montmorin à la Marck*.



A MEETING OF THE JACOBIN CLUB.



personified in Louis XVI. reduced government to an insoluble problem. Unfortunately, they cared little by what means they inculcated their belief.

The Jacobins had triumphed over Lafayette, over the Department of Paris, over the ministers; but they had still to contend with certain restraining influences. The Legislative Assembly was not prepared to go all lengths—it would not, for example, condemn Lafayette for his offence against the Jacobins without due consideration, and had not yet reported on his case. Nor was the Council-General of the Commune as revolutionary as was its executive, the *corps municipal*, which had Pétion for Mayor, Manuel as Procurator, and Danton as a Procurator-Substitute. The endeavour of the Jacobins, therefore, was to strengthen the Republican party in the Commune. To this end they turned to the sections. These were, as Danton always insisted, “the true Commune,” and their voice must be obeyed, but they had no legal standing. “Let them be at least organised and have an opportunity of taking united action; and having this, let the Commune follow at their bidding.” Such, if not the language, was clearly the intention of the *corps municipal* when on July 17th it established a central *bureau de correspondance* between the forty-eight sections, gave it a meeting-place in the Hôtel de Ville, and appointed Manuel its director. Here

then was a permanent organisation made up of members of the sections, which received the *arrêtés* of each section and communicated them to the others ; which corresponded with provincial municipalities, took upon itself to form resolutions and inflict penalties,¹ and presently, as we shall see, to oust the legitimate Commune, overpower the Assembly, and overthrow the Monarchy itself. To such power had the sections, successors to the districts—the mere electoral divisions of 1789—attained.

A few days later, on the 22nd and 23rd of July, the formal proclamation that the country was in danger was made in Paris. Over the Hôtel de Ville floated a black flag. Hour by hour, from six in the morning till seven at night, cannon fired and drums beat ; official processions promenaded the streets, bearing a tri-colour flag with the printed words, "Citizens, the country is in danger."² At every great crossing, and in all the squares, tents were erected on raised amphitheatres, in which sat municipal officers, waiting to enrol volunteers for the frontier, and so numerous were the recruits that the officials could hardly overtake the work they had to do. Many of the *fédérés* hurried to the frontier, but the Jacobins did what they could to prevent the more excitable among them from leaving the

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 138 *seq.*

² *Id.*, p. 102.

capital. "The moment is decisive," they had already said. "Our brothers in arms are here; if they leave without certain great measures having been carried out, all the sacrifices of the Revolution are for nothing, and the country will fall back into slavery."¹

On the evening of the 23rd of July a petition was read to the National Assembly, which gave definite expression to what the Jacobins meant by "great measures." "Legislators," said the petition, "Louis XVI. has betrayed the nation, the law and his oaths. The people is Sovereign, you are its representatives, pronounce his dethronement, and France will be saved."² The dethronement of the king was, of course, no new idea; it had been openly mooted a year before, but the time was not then ripe, and the petitioners who had asked for it had been refused by the Assembly and rudely scattered on the Champ de Mars. Not so now; petitions to this end were calmly received by the National Assembly, and sent to the *commission extraordinaire* to be reported on, after which a debate on the dethronement of the king was inevitable.

As early as July 25th Chabot, an ardent Jacobin, proposed that an inquiry should be held on the conduct of the king, and asserted at the same time the incontestable right of the people to change the

¹ *Journal des Jacobins*, No. 233.

² From the town of Angers; *Archiv. parl.*, vol. xlvii. p. 192.

Constitution. Next day the Assembly proposed to send an address to Louis, praying him for the last time to join with them in defending the Constitution and the throne.¹ Little more than three years before a somewhat similar message had been sent from the Third Estate to the clergy and nobles of France. We know how that message ended; the clergy and nobles sent no reply, and the Third Estate acted alone; the Jacobins were ready to do so now, and the Commune was ready to help them. Not so the Assembly, which had still a Feuillant majority. Even Brissot, leader of the Girondists, tried to stem the republican flood. In his opinion, the violent dethronement of the king was a last resource, and one which might entail danger to liberty, and he sought to restrain the Republicans from acting precipitately. "If," he said, "there are men who wish to establish a Republic on the ruins of a Constitutional Monarchy, let the sword of the law strike them as it would the supporters of a double Chamber, or the counter-revolutionists of Coblenz." The *tribunes* and the extreme Left shouted "traitor," "rascal," and the like, but the majority of the deputies approved of the speech.²

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlvii. pp. 127 and 159.

² *Id.*, p. 161, note on Brissot's speech of July 26th, and Mortimer-Ternaux, vol. ii. p. 126.

It was, therefore, necessary to force the hand of the representatives, and this the Commune and sections fully recognised. Already, on July 24th, the *corps municipal* had invited special commissioners from the sections to meet at the *bureau de correspondance* in the Hôtel de Ville, and draw up a petition to the Assembly as to the best way of meeting the dangers which threatened France. The remedy they proposed was the dethronement of the king and the appointment of a provisional government until a National Convention could meet and decide on the form of the future government of France.¹ This then was a blow directed against the Assembly, as well as against the king.

A week later, one of the most revolutionary of the sections, that of Mauconseil, took a resolution by which it abjured its oath to the king "ten times perjured," and to the law, as represented by an Assembly no longer giving effect to the people's will, and held itself henceforth bound only to the nation. This resolution it printed and posted on the walls of Paris, inviting the forty-seven other sections to accompany it to the Salle du Manège on August 5th and announce its resolution to the deputies.²

The sections were thus taking it upon themselves

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. pp. 171 *seq.* and 393, *Adresse des sections demandant la déchéance du roi*.

² Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 173 *seq.*

to dethrone both king and Assembly. It was, however, only a minority of the sections that were willing to support the audacious conduct of Mauconseil, or send commissioners to draw up revolutionary petitions at the Hôtel de Ville; many felt things had gone too far and protested, while the Assembly condemned the resolution of Mauconseil as unconstitutional. Notwithstanding, when August the 5th came, a deputation of the men of Mauconseil appeared in the Salle du Manège and declared their determination to hold to their resolution. The Assembly refused them the honours of the sitting and broke up their *séance*.

Meantime, while the sections discussed in the Hôtel de Ville the petition on the dethronement of the king, the *comité central des fédérés* organised a secret Directory of Insurrection, composed of fifteen members and inspired by Danton. On the evening of July 26th a little knot of men, Santerre and Fournier among them, met in the Soleil d'Or, a little café opposite the ruins of the Bastille, at the entrance of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Now this same evening a *fête* was being held on the site of the Bastille, and the people feasted late and danced still later. Meantime in the café the Directory of Insurrection drew up a plan for attacking the Tuileries early next day. The people were at hand, excited by wine, and easily

led, and everything, it was said, could be ready by four in the morning.

But Mandat, an able and loyal officer, had replaced Romainvilliers as Commander of the National Guard. Rumours of an attack on the Tuileries reached him, and six to seven thousand of the Guard were called out, and a message sent to Pétion saying what had been done. For that night the Tuileries was safe, and Pétion went to the Place de la Bastille, told the conspirators that their plot was known and advised the people to go quietly home.¹

The attack, therefore, was postponed, and it was postponed the more readily because day by day the conspirators expected a powerful reinforcement of the *fédérés*; the contingent from the Bouches-du-Rhône,—the famous Marseillais,—had not yet arrived. On the 28th of June these men had met in the church of Saint-Dominique at Marseilles, had chosen their commanding officers, and had received their equipment from the Department, and from the ladies of the city a magnificent tri-colour flag. On the 2nd of July they had started for Paris, but the roads were bad, and it was only on the evening of Sunday the 29th of July that they reached Charanton, a little to the east of Paris, and were received by their countrymen Barbaroux and Rebecqui.²

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 127 seq.

² Pollio et Marcel, *Le bataillon du 10 août*, p. 77.

The Marseillais have been held up to something like execration by many historians, but it is unfair to regard them as mere brigands and plunderers. They left their homes and faced an arduous journey in the heat of a southern summer because they believed French liberty was at stake, and if their words were violent and their deeds only less so, they were southerners, and were incited by the Jacobins. On the evening on which they left Marseilles they had stood round a "tree of liberty" and had received their instructions from the Jacobin Club. "Go and make the tyrant tremble on a throne he no longer deserves . . . tell him that the Sovereign people is come to sanction the decrees struck dead by his monstrous veto. Swear to live free, and to purge the earth of tyrants, and of the enemies of freedom."¹ The leaders of the republican movement expected much from such allies.

On the 30th of July the Marseillais were to enter Paris, and it was intended that they should enter in triumph. Forty thousand men from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, led by Santerre, were to meet them; hundreds of citizen patriots would, it was supposed, join them, the Hôtel de Ville was to be suddenly surprised, and the delegates of the sections forced into the place of the legitimate Commune. Pétion was to be kept a willing prisoner in the Mairie,

¹ Pollio et Marcel, *Le bataillon du 10 août*, p. 141.

the Department against its will to be confined to its Hôtel, guns were to be seized, bridges and important posts occupied by armed men, the Tuileries and the Salle du Manège surrounded, and helpless before the numbers and determination of the insurgents, the deputies were to save the state by dethroning its sovereign.¹ It was a bloodless revolution that was planned by the Directory or the Insurrection and Barbaroux the Marseillais.

Events, however, disappointed the conspirators. The forty thousand of Santerre did not appear, the citizens were peaceably inclined, even a little afraid of the Marseillais, and the day of vengeance was turned into one of speeches and of banqueting, ending with a fight between the new-comers and the National Guard. Respectable Paris indeed wished to see the last of the Marseillais; but the camp at Soissons could not receive them, and they remained in the capital, a serious source of danger, and another voice raised against the king. "We come to make good the oath of the citizens of Marseilles and to fight for liberty. The name of Louis XVI. recalls to us no idea but that of treason. Hasten to pronounce his dethronement a thousand times deserved."² In these words, on August 2nd,

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, p. 146.

² Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 155, quoted from *Logographe*, vol. xxvi. p. 79.

the Marseillais officially informed the Assembly of their arrival in Paris.

And now, at length, to Paris, heated and excited, came on August 2nd the long expected Manifesto from the Allies, that which Louis had tried to inspire by the mission of Mallet du Pan. On it the king based his last hope, for if wisely worded, he believed it might yet incite a sufficient following to rally to his cause; it might yet convince his people that he wished only to be relieved of the factions which were preventing the prosperity of France. But if the aim of the Allies had been the destruction, instead of the salvation of the Monarchy, they could not have better worded their Manifesto. They disavowed, it is true, any idea of conquest, but they declared their purpose of re-establishing the legitimate power of the Crown; they threatened to treat as enemies, and to punish as rebels, any National Guards who fought against the invaders, to destroy by fire and sword the homesteads of those inhabitants of towns or villages who dared to defend themselves, and to give Paris over to total destruction if the Tuileries were invaded or the least violence done to the person of the king. Well may Mortimer-Ternaux speak "of these terrible friends who had obeyed no order, listened to no prayer" of the unfortunate king.¹

¹ Mortimer-Ternaux, *Histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 166.

Louis sent a message to the Assembly with the notice of the Manifesto. "Never," he said, "would he receive the law either at the hands of foreigners or at those of a faction . . . to his last breath he would maintain the national independence,"¹ but the Left would listen to no asseverations on the part of the king. "What has the king done," they cried, "to stop the plan of counter-revolution? Nothing. On whose behalf have the foreign courts armed? On his. What do they ask from us? To re-establish despotism."² As the Jacobin orator ended his speech Pétion entered the hall with the petition for the dethronement of the king drawn up by the commissioners of the sections at the Hôtel de Ville. "Louis XVI.," it said, "has separated his interests from those of the nation, as he has done so, we do so also. . . . By an act of indulgence, we had wished to ask from you his suspension only so long as the country is in danger, but this would be contrary to the Constitution. Louis XVI. constantly invokes the Constitution; we also invoke it in our turn, and demand his dethronement."³

The National Assembly, however, was not willing to be dictated to by the Commune of Paris. It handed the petition to the *commission extraordinaire*

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlvii. p. 423.

² *Id.*, p. 424 *seq.*

³ *Id.*, p. 426.

without comment and in order to prevent inflammatory speeches broke up the sitting. Before entering on the question of the dethronement it wished to settle the question of Lafayette, whose crime was that of opposing the Jacobins. If the moderates in the Assembly could score a victory on this head, they hoped to triumph also on the more serious question regarding the king. Accordingly the report of the commission on the conduct of Lafayette was fixed for the 8th, and that on the petitions for the dethronement for the 9th of August.

Critical as was the situation, despondent as Louis himself was, the Royalists in Paris were still hopeful. "This day has passed very quietly," wrote Mrs. Standish on July 29th, "and I every day think there is less and less danger for a quiet stranger in Paris. Honest Flandrin dined with me the other day, and told me he expected nothing less than the old regime." "Our political horrors," she adds on August 5th, "one would imagine, had nearly reached their height; in society we begin to be tired of talking of them; . . . I cannot conceive it possible to be in a more peaceable situation than we are in this very moment, the *déchéance du roi* does not give us the least inquietude." When, therefore, the Assembly by four hundred and six to two hundred and eighty votes found there was no charge against Lafayette,

Parisian society "hoped that the Assembly would show equal courage on behalf of the best of kings."¹

But this decision of the Assembly was highly unacceptable to the *fédérés* and to the sections, and the sitting of the 9th August opened with the reading of letters from deputies, who, because they had voted for Lafayette, had been stoned, threatened with knives, swords and daggers; and had even been seized and hurried menacingly to the *lanterne*.² At this the Right declared that unless the safety of the deputies was assured discussion was impossible, especially on so grave a matter as the dethronement of the king. It was even proposed to leave Paris and deliberate elsewhere, for not only were the deputies assailed outside the Salle du Manège but, "the authority of the Assembly itself was powerless against the *tribunes*."³

Thus, in indirect but truly significant fashion the sovereignty of the mob was acknowledged by the representatives of the people. Still more significant was a message from the Minister of Justice, and an admission from Rœderer, Procurator-Syndic of the Department. As the Right and Left stormed one

¹ Letters from Mrs. Standish to her husband on the 29th of July, and the 5th and 8th of August 1792.

² The posts from which hung the *réverbères* which lighted Paris and which formed a convenient gallows at need.

³ Rœderer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours.*, p. 334.

against another, and the *tribunes* interrupted by hisses or applause, a message came from de Joly, Minister of Justice, declaring the state of disorder in Paris such that the laws were powerless to repress it, and that without the support of the Assembly the ministers refused longer to incur responsibility.¹ What in such circumstances could the Assembly do? It had just sent for Rœderer to throw upon him the task of securing the inviolability of the deputies, and it now asked him what measures were taken to secure the safety of the capital. Rœderer replied by giving an account of the communications which had passed between him and the Mayor of Paris, but he made it clear to the Assembly that the Department could only watch over the condition of public order and give instructions to the Commune; it could not enforce these instructions.

Here, then, on the 9th of August, four years almost to a day from the date of the king's promise to recall the States-General, was a National Assembly admitting itself powerless before a turbulent mob, a government declaring itself helpless without the Assembly, a Department unable to carry out the orders of the legislative body, and a Commune on which hung the fate of the Crown, Government, Assembly and Department, who could, but would not act.

¹ Rœderer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours.*, p. 355.

“The Mayor,” said Rœderer, “had not, and did not do, what the Department ordered.”¹ The Assembly did not feel itself strong enough to take decisive measures; on the plea of disturbance it again postponed the question of the dethronement, and although it had been warned that at midnight the tocsin would sound, although the Department, the Commune and the sections were sitting day and night, it broke up at six in the evening and went home.²

¹ Rœderer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours*, p. 344.

² *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlvii. p. 616.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE END.



MEDAL STRUCK
IN COMMEMORATION OF
AUGUST 10TH, 1792.

ON August 9th as we have seen, the Assembly postponed the debate on the dethronement of the king. That same morning the section of the Quinze-Vingts which met in the church of the Enfants-Trouvés in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine passed a resolution to the effect that if the Assembly did not decree the dethronement before eleven o'clock that night, it would sound the tocsin at stroke of twelve, beat the *générale* and rouse the whole population to insurrection.¹ Yet between five and six in the afternoon, Pétion, summoned to the National

¹ Rœderer, P. L., *Chronique de cinquante jours*; and *Arch. parl.*, vol. xlvii. p. 630.





Assembly, assured it that Paris was quiet and public order maintained. At seven the deputies left the Salle du Manège and went home; at eleven at night Mandat declared his measures taken for the safety of the Tuileries, and he himself confident as to their efficiency, and at the same hour the Quinze-Vingts, finding itself alone in its church of the Enfants-Trouvés, sent out commissioners to the *bureau de correspondance* with power to concert with commissioners chosen by the other sections how best "to save the country."¹ Even then it seemed uncertain whether or no a rising would actually take place.

By ten o'clock next day Louis XVI. and his family had left the Tuileries and had taken refuge in the Salle du Manège; the palace had been invaded, its defenders scattered and slain. For at midnight the *tocsin* sounded, not from the Enfants-Trouvés, but from the churches of the three revolutionary sections of Mauconseil, the Lombards and the Gravilliers, and the dread signal was repeated from one church after another by rioters and by busy-bodies, many of whom rang, they hardly knew why.

At the sound the *fédérés* and the revolutionary element in the capital gathered in the Faubourg

¹ See Mortimer-Ternaux, *L'histoire de la terreur*, vol. ii. p. 222 seq., for conduct of the commissioners.

Saint-Antoine, and the Faubourg Saint-Marceau to the north and south of the Seine; drums beat the *générale* in every quarter, calling out the volunteer battalions of the National Guard—some to insurrection and riot, others to resistance in the interests of peace—and the deputies hurried back to the Salle du Manège. There they spent the long anxious night in hearing reports brought first from one quarter and then from another, and passing from these to the order of the day, listened to motions on the erection of a new parish, on a law on patents, or on the trade in negroes, but they took no decisive step to quell the disorder, and they left Paris to govern herself.¹

Meantime, in the Hôtel de Ville, the commissioners of the sections sat in one hall, while the Council-General of the Commune sat in another. As the night wore on the commissioners, supported by the popular voice, grew bolder; while the Council-General, overmastered by the interruptions and menaces of a public for whom even the Commune of Paris was too conservative, lost courage, and when morning broke found itself a puppet in the hands of the commissioners, who used its legal authority to work their illegal will.

Orders were sent out cancelling the arrangements made by Mandat, and summoning him to the Hôtel

¹ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlvii. p. 616 seq.

de Ville. There, accused of treachery by the commissioners, he was straightway condemned to prison, and when the Council-General interfered on his behalf, the commissioners of the sections, declaring themselves invested with full powers to save the country, deposed the Commune from its functions and took forcible possession of its hall.

Then "anarchy began." On his way to prison Mandat was murdered, and Santerre, head of the National Guard in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine and a member of the Directory of Insurrection, was installed in his place. "Once again Heaven had pity on the insurgents."¹ "The brave *fédérés*" could work "the plan long concerted by their secret directory";² "the great day" had come.³

Rœderer, waiting anxiously in the Tuileries, finding that Mandat did not return, seeing twenty cannon directed against the palace, and knowing that a great body of men was hastening towards the Place du Carrousel, recognised the truth, and persuaded Louis to leave the palace and take refuge with the representatives of the nation. "Gentlemen," said the king to the faithful followers who had flocked to the palace for his defence, "I beg of you to go home and to give up a fruitless attempt ;

¹ Marat; *Ami du peuple* du 7 août.

² Pétion, J., *Œuvres de, ou pièces intéressantes pour l'histoire*, vol. iv. p. 327.

³ *Archives parlementaires*, vol. xlvii. p. 616.

there is nothing further to do here, either for you or for me.”¹

With the entrance of Louis XVI. into the Salle du Manège the monarchy of a thousand years, the oldest monarchy in Europe, fell. The king entered the hall on the morning of the 10th with the honours accorded to a sovereign: he left it in the early hours of the 11th suspended from his functions, himself and his family a hostage in the hands of his people. On the 12th of August the care of the royal family was given over by the Assembly to the new and self-constituted Commune, who, on the 14th, removed it from the shelter afforded by the Assembly in its Convent of the Feuillants to a tower in the Temple, once the gay court of the Comte d'Artois. The royal carriages drove through the streets of Paris in midst of a people forbidden on pain of death to raise a voice or a hat in token of respect to him whom they had called “Father of the Country” and “Restorer of the Liberty of France.” He was plain Louis Capet now.

In the Temple, deprived on the 19th of August of the few faithful attendants permitted to accompany them, and left with one single servant, the king and queen, Madame Elisabeth and the two children, lived

¹ Tourzel, Mme. de, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 215.

quiet, dignified, and uncomplaining days. Their sufferings and privations cannot be entered on here. Suffice it to say of Louis that he kept to the last his calm courage before danger, and of Marie-Antoinette that her whilom enemy, the Comte de Provence, felt constrained to admit that she bore herself now as always in the face of trial and privation as a true daughter of Maria-Teresa, her great and heroic mother.¹

On January 21st, 1793, Louis suffered death by the guillotine, and on October 16th, 1794, Marie-Antoinette died by the same dread instrument. Her coffin, we are told, cost six francs,² and the list of articles, simple in the extreme, left behind her in the Conciergerie, may still be seen in the National Archives. So ended that marriage of an Austrian princess with the French heir, of which Maria-Teresa was so proud.

What followed after August 10th—the decree summoning a National Convention, the petitions demanding the abolition of royalty; the domiciliary visits instituted by the Commune and the consequent filling of the prisons by Royalists; the fresh reverses in the army, and the panic and intrigue which ended in the terrible massacres of September 2nd and 3rd

¹ See *Revue des Deux Mondes* du 15 juillet 1904; *Réflexions historiques sur Marie-Antoinette* (par Louis XVIII.,) a paper lately discovered by M. Ernest Daudet.

² Rocheterie, M. de la, *Histoire de Marie-Antoinette*, vol. ii. p. 590.

—belongs to the story of the Republic rather than to that of the Monarchy. On September 21st the Convention met and voted the abolition of royalty; on the 22nd it decreed that all acts should henceforth be dated “the first year of the French Republic,” and thus, in somewhat informal fashion, decided on the form of the future government of France.

Here, then, ends the story of the fall of the old French Monarchy. And perhaps in leaving the study of the period which it covers there is no one thing more striking to its student than the narrowing down of great issues to mere party questions. So at least it seems; and yet, whatever one may feel as to the methods of the Jacobins, France was probably right in believing that at this crisis in her history her greatest danger would be a Monarchy thrust on her from without, and conditioned by men whose object was to restore the old regime and to whom the aims and principles of the Revolution were but as an evil dream. If she chose wrongly, she paid dearly for her error, but she issued from the fierce fire of democratic tyranny and of war, maimed and crippled for the moment, it is true, but fitted at length to enjoy the benefits for which Mirabeau and Mounier, Barnave and Lameth, Danton and Vergniaud each in his own fashion prepared the way.

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INDEX.

- Abbaye, prison of the, 112.
Actes des Apôtres, 217.
 "Active citizens," 41, 42, 221, 225.
 Adélaïde and Victoire, Mesdames, 197.
 Agriculture, Societies of, 9.
 Aiguillon, Duc d', and privilege, 162.
 Alsace, *German Princes in, 302, 371; attitude of Assembly towards, 302; and Leopold II., 359.
 Altar of the Country, 259, 341, 342, 349.
Ami du peuple, L', 217, 334, 335.
Ami du roi, L', 317.
 Amnesty of Sep. 13th, 1791, 347, 365, 387.
Appel nominal, The, 213.
 April, 18th, 1791, 309 *seq.*
 Archbishop's Palace, electors meet in, 48, 51.
 Aristocracy, The, and revolutionary societies, 33.
 Army, The, insubordination in, 251, 282; military clubs in, 282 *seq.*
Arrêté, 72 n.
Arrêts, 72 n.; of July 5th, 1788, 18, 24; of August 8th, 1788, 4; of August 16th, 1788, 25.
 Artois, Comte d', 152; and Brienne, 26; as *émigré*, 270, 272; at Coblenz, 301; at Pillnitz, 360; German Electors and, 370.
Assemblée des Représentants de la Commune de Paris, 149.
 Assembly of Electors, 48, 51; constitute themselves a permanent body, 54; a political centre, 106; in July, 1789, 118, 120, 128; and *comité permanent*, 123, 148.
Assignats, first issue of, 235; later issues, 288, 290.
 August 4th, 1789, 161 *seq.*
 August 10th, 1792, 425 *seq.*
 Austria, and French Revolution, 272, 358 *seq.*, 379; and Prussia, 273, 303, 359 *seq.*, 376, 379, 401; Louis XVI. and, 276, 359, 364; war declared against, 374.
 Austrian Committee, The, 368, and war, 376; Girondists and, 380.
 Avenue de Paris, 63, 91, 94, 181, 184, 185.
 Avignon, and Revolution, 358, 359.
Bailliages, 41, 219; abolition of, 224.
 Bailly, J. S., 49, 101, 190, 250; Paris Elector, 53; Dean of Third Estate, 79, 80, 83, 87 *seq.*; President of National Assembly, 92, *passim*, 99, 102; Mayor of Paris, 143, 145 *seq.*, 148 *seq.*, 203, 307, 310, 318, 343, 349; retires from office, 386.
 Bancal des Issarts, 115.
 Barbaroux, C. J. M., 415, 417.
 Barentin, Comte de, Keeper of the Seals, 192; and States-General, 37, 65, 77, 80, 87, 90; and National Assembly, 97, 105.

- Barnave, Marquis de, 198, 212, 256; member of Breton club, 74; and monastic orders, 238; and king and people, 258; and monarchy, 338; member of Feuillants Club, 354.
- Barrières*, set fire to, 120; of Point du Jour, 145.
- Basoches, The, 124, 130.
- Bastille, 85; siege of, 128 *seq.*; effects of fall of, 152, 158, 161; heroes of, 165; anniversaries of fall of, 250, 259 *seq.*, 381; demolition of, 153; column on site of, 407; fête on site of, 414.
- Baudouin, printer to National Assembly, 211 n.
- Beauharnais, Alex, Vicomte de, 162, 318.
- Belgium, and French Revolution, 273, 378.
- Besenal, Baron P. S. de, 110.
- Beugnot, Comte de, 38.
- Biron, Duc de, 111, 377.
- Bishops, election of, 225, 241; *mémoire* against civil constitution of the clergy, 293; and civil oath, 296.
- Body Guard, The King's, 178, 182, 194, 201; and people, 183, 185; and defence of palace, 196, 197.
- Bordeaux (Cicé), Archbishop of, 10, 92.
- Bordeaux, Parlement of, 35.
- Bouillé, Marquis de, 289; at Nancy, 284; and flight of king, 315.
- Boulevard du Temple, 119.
- Bourgeoisie*, 22, 50, 52; in old States-General, 18, 22 *seq.*, 30; and peasants, 44, 81; and franchise, 46, 154, 221.
- Brest, insurrection at, 285; Chateauxvieux insurgents at, 388.
- Breteuil, Baron de, Minister of King's Household, 116, 152, 276.
- Breton Club, origin of, 73; becomes Jacobin club, 213 *seq.*
- Brézé, H. E., Marquis de Dreux-, 61, 99.
- Brienne, Loménie de, Minister of Finance, 1787-1788, 16, 17, 21, 25, 36, 232.
- Brigands, fear of, 158 *seq.*
- Brissot, J. P., 217, 328; leader of Girondists, 373; and Austrian Committee, 380; and ministers, 401; and Republic, 412.
- Brittany, Parlement of, 35; nobles of, 70; and veto, 172.
- Brogie, Maréchal de, 116, 152.
- Buckles, silver, sale of, 228.
- Bureau de la ville*, 106, 122, 123, superseded, 218.
- Café Amaury, 73.
- Café de Foy, 107, 112.
- Cahiers*, origin of, 42; parish, 42; for the Orders, 43, 48; effect of on people, 44; as mandates, 52, 68; on monarchy, 164; on taxation, 90, 167; on veto, 171.
- Caisse d'Escompte*, 230, 287, 288; Necker and, 230.
- Caisse d'extraordinaire*, 231, 234, 237, 239.
- Caisse patriotique*, 228.
- Calonne, C. A. de, Controller-General (1783-1787), 13, 25, 31.
- Camus, A. J., 93, 212, 239.
- Cantons, The, 220, 224.
- Capitation*, 46.
- Catharine II., Empress, and Austria, 272; and *émigrés*, 274.
- Censors, royal, 18.
- Chambers, question of two, 169, 364.
- Chambonas, Minister of Foreign Affairs (June to July 1792), 401.
- Chambres de vacation*, 156.
- Champ de Mai, 4, 94.
- Champ de Mars, 4, 128, 138, 252, 258, 259, 340, 341, 342, 343, 388, 407; massacre of, 342.
- Champs-Élysées, 128, 180.
- Charities, 10 *seq.*
- Chartres, Bishop of, 92, 162.
- Châteaux*, burning of, 159.
- Chateauxvieux, Swiss regiment of, 282; fête in honour of its insurgents, 387 *seq.*

- Châtelet, Duc de, 111, 162.
 Châtelet, The, 3, 46, 47, 48, 51.
 Chimay, Madame de, 312.
Chronique de Paris, 179, 189, 217, 341.
 Church property, 232, National Assembly and, 232 *seq.*
 Civil constitution of clergy, 239 *seq.*; the civil oath, 242; effects of, 243; Pope and, 292 *seq.*; opposition to, 293; prelates and, 293.
 Civil, military, and ecclesiastical dignities, equality in, 69.
 Clavière, E., Minister of Finance (March to June, 1792), 373; dismissal of, 383.
 Clergy, and finance, 18, 75, 232; and elections, 41, 48; and Third Estate, 67, 72, 75 *seq.*; *haut et bas*, 69; join the Third Estate, 92, 101; renounce tithes, 163; non-juring, decrees against, 366, 380.
 Clermont-Tonnerre, Comte de, 170, 212.
 Club de 1789; de Valois; des Impartiaux; Monarchique, 217.
 Club des Cordeliers, and king, 309, 310; declaration on tyrannicides, 328; origin of, 334; demands a Republic, 346.
 Clubs, political, 73.
 Coalition, European, proposed by *émigrés*, 360.
 Coblenz, *émigrés* at, 301.
 Cockade, patriotic, 118, 125, 146 n, 177; white, 178.
Commission extraordinaire, 397, 404, 411, 421.
Comité de Constitution, 166, 322, 344, 347.
Comités de législation criminelle, de la marine, militaire, des finances, 158 n, 231, 288, 330.
Comité ecclésiastique, 236.
Comité des recherches, 319.
Comité permanent, 143, 153; appointed, 123; and demand for arms, 125, 126; on July 14th, 1789, 128 *seq.*, 133, 138; becomes *comité provisoire*, 148.
Comité provisoire, of Paris, 148; provincial, 218.
 Commons, The. *See* Third Estate.
 Commune, The. *See* Municipality.
 Compiègne, 105, 114, 204.
 Condé, L. S., Prince de, 152; manifesto of July, 1790, 270; camp at Worms, 301; address to soldiers, 363; and German Electors, 370.
 Condorcet, Marquis de, 214, 338, 377.
 Congress, European, proposed by Leopold, 359; proposed by king and queen, 362, 371.
 Constitution, necessity of, 66, 68; bases of, 155, 351; making of, 161, 164, 166, 218; and Declaration of Rights, 166; Articles of, 168 *seq.*; king hesitates to sign, 178; king sanctions its first Articles, 186; oaths to maintain, 249, and *bourgeoise*, 339; completion of, 344; accepted by king, 347; proclamation of, 349; its defects, 349.
 Constitutional Act, 388, received by Legislative Assembly, 353.
 Constitutionals, The, and people, 339; and Feuillant club, 354; become the Right in Legislative Assembly, 355.
 Corny, M. de, *Procureur du roi* on *bureau de la ville*, 122, 126, 127, 129.
Corvée, The, 7.
 Councils of King, 157; Acts of 36; of 27th December, 1788, 37; of July, 1789, 91 *seq.*
 "Country in danger," Vergniaud proposes to declare, 400; pronounced, 404; proclamation of, 410.
Courrier de Provence, Le, 74.
Cour plénière, 17, 18.
 Court, and National Assembly, 89, 93; and riots, 118.
 Courts, Civil and Criminal, 225, 286; of appeal, 225.
 Crime, punishment of, 108.

- Crosne, M. de, Lieutenant of Police, 48, 148.
- Crown, The, and Paris, 2; and States-General, 5, 38, 78; and parlements, 17; and Notables, 31; and sale of offices, 163; alienation of lands, 234; and the sale of posts, 163.
- Curés*, admitted to First Order, 69; sympathise with the Third, 70, 76, 80, 243; popular election of, 225, 241.
- Curtius, waxworks of, 119.
- Danton, G. J., one of Directory of Department of Paris, 311; and king, 314; and Cordeliers, 334; and a Republic, 336, 341, 342, 344; Substitute - Procurator of Commune, 386; and sections, 409; and Directory of Insurrection, 414.
- Dauphiné, *États* of, 34 *seq.*
- David, J. L., 58 n, 59.
- Declaration of Rights, 155; its political import, 166; king hesitates to sign, 178; king sanctions, 186; Table of, 388, 395.
- Decrees, 69; and king's sanction of, after flight to Varennes, 322.
- Democrats, 338; distinguished from Republicans, 336; in 1791 and 1792, 384.
- Department of Paris, 385; and non-jurors, 308; and king, 311, 314; measures taken by, on 20th June, 319; and Commune, 386, 393, 491.
- Departments of France, 220; established, 223; administration of, 223.
- Deputies, election of, 41, 52, 225; and the people, 81 *seq.*, 183; *deputés suppléans*, 249.
- Desmoulins, Camille, 118, 125, 217.
- Diderot, Denis, on manual labour, 12.
- Dillon, General, 377; murdered, 378.
- Dioceses, 219, 241.
- "Directory of Insurrection," 414.
- Districts of France, 220; established, 223; their administration, 225.
- Districts, Paris, 47; political importance, 50; organise *milice bourgeoise*, 121; and municipality, 148; become sections, 386.
- Double representation, 31, 32; granted to provincial assemblies, 34; to States-General, 37.
- Drouet, post-master of Sainte-Menehould, 332.
- Dumont, Etienne, 48.
- Dumouriez, Ch-F., Minister of Foreign Affairs, (March to June, 1792), 374; and war, 374.
- Dupont de Nemours, 212, 242; on monastic orders, 238.
- Duport, Adrian, 338, 355.
- Duport-du-Tertre, M. L. F., Minister of Justice (1790-1792), 320, 369.
- Duportail, Minister of War (1790-1791), resigns, 367.
- Duranthon, Minister of Justice (March to July, 1792), 373.
- Edicts of May, 1788, 35.
- Elections to States-General, 41 *seq.*, 45; to National Assembly, 220, 225; to administrative bodies, 225; of clergy, 225, 240; of judges, 225.
- Elie, Jacob-Job, 130, 132.
- Elisabeth, Madame, 197, 202, 395, 407, 428.
- Élus*, 34.
- Émigrés*, The, 189; political importance of, 153, 300; schemes of, 270 *seq.*; and foreign Powers, 272; and king, 275; confiscation of property of, 291; decrees against, 365, 371; expelled from Coblenz, 371; and war, 376.
- England, and French Revolution, 273, 359, 379.
- États*, provincial, 18, 34, 70.
- Exposition des principes sur la constitution du clergé*, 294.
- Famine, fear of, 108, 115, 178, 179, 230; provision against, 190.

- Favras, Marquis de, 245 *seq.*
 February 4th, 1790, 247 *seq.*
 The *Fédérés* of 1790, 257, 258; of 1792, Jacobins and, 405 *seq.*; and Paris, 406; and dethronement of king, 410; and 10th of August, 1792, 425.
 Fersen, Comte de, 325.
Fêtes, de la Fédération of 1790, 251 *seq.*, 258; of 1791, 381; of 1792, 404, 407; *de la liberté*, 387 *seq.*; *de la loi*, 389.
 Feudal rights, *cahiers* and, 69; abolition of, 163.
 Feuillants, district of, 49; Club, 344, 354, 355; Terrace of, 390.
 Finance, its political influence, 12, 40 *seq.*, 90, 228 *seq.*; and clergy, 18, 228 *seq.*; condition of, in 1788, 25 *seq.*; in 1789, 168, 228, 232; in 1790, 287; *caisse patriotique*, 228; tax on income, 229; policy of National Assembly concerning, 290.
 Flachslanden, Baron de, Queen's letter to, 205.
 Flesselles, J. de, Provost of the Merchants, 126, 128, 132, 135, 136, 138; murder of, 133.
 Flue, de, officer of the Swiss, 131.
 Foulon, J. F., Minister of King's Household (1789), 116; murder of, 160.
 France, and Democratic institutions, 174; relations with European Powers, 272 *seq.*, 358 *seq.*; and war, 370, 372, 374 *seq.*; declares war against Austria, 375; against Prussia, 401.
Franc-fief, 22.
 Franche-Comté, 35, 70.
 Francis II., Emperor of Austria, 372.
 François (baker), murder of, 207.
 Frederick William II. King of Prussia, 273, 360, 361.
seq., 119, 127, 130, 176; join *milice bourgeoise*, 124.
 Garde de l'Hôtel de Ville, 124.
 Garde de Paris, 124.
 Gardes de la Prévôté de l'Hôtel du Roi, 95.
Généralités, 219, 223, 224.
 Gensonné, A., 356, 368; and Austrian Committee, 380.
 Gérard, Michel, 228.
 Gerville, Cahier de, Minister of the Interior (1791-1792), 367.
 Girondins, 368.
Gouvernements, 219.
 Grave, P. M. de, Minister of War (March, 1792), 374; resigns office, 378.
 Grégoire, The Abbé, 137, 212, 295; on Jacobin Club, 216; on prelates, 297.
 Grenoble, 35.
 Guadet, M. E., 356, 368, 397.
 Guet de Paris, 124.
 Guillotin, Dr., 94.
 Gustave III., and *émigrés*, 273, 359; proposes a Northern League, 274; death of, 375.
 Halles, The, 108, 179.
 Héroult de Séchelles, 404.
 Holy See, The, and civil constitution of the clergy, 241, 292, 298.
 Hospitals, 8, 10.
 Hôtel de Ville, 3, *rentes* paid at, 25; and elections, 46 *seq.*, 51; Assembly of Electors in, 106, 120, 132 *passim*; deputies visit, 142, 143; king visits, 146, 147; on October 5th and 6th, 179, 191; red flag on, 343; sections at, 409; *Salle des Gouverneurs*, 149.
 Hulin, "Conqueror of the Bastille," 129 *seq.*
 Intendants, 223, 224.
 Invalides, Hôtel des, attack on, 126, 127.
 Issoudun, and patriotic gifts, 228.

- Jacobin Club, 213 *seq.*, 228, 354 ; branch societies, 215 ; growing influence of, 385 ; and *fêtes*, 387, 388, 390, 392 ; and a Republic, 337, 340 ; Lafayette and, 391 *seq.*, 396 ; and *fedérés*, 405 *seq.* ; and Commune, 409.
- January 4, 1791, 297.
- Jeu de Paume, Salle du, 94 ; oath of, 98 ; third anniversary of, 390.
- Jews, and civil rights, 222.
- John II., 5.
- Joly de, Minister of Justice (July-August, 1792), 422.
- Joseph II. of Austria, 272 ; on death of, 272.
- Jourdan, *coupe-tête*, 195.
- Judges, election of, 225 ; new, 286.
- Juges de pair*, election of, 225.
- July 14. *See* Bastille.
- June 20th, 1789, 94 *seq.*, 1792, 390 *seq.*, 396.
- Juries, 281, 286.
- Justice, reforms in, 7, 17, 224 *seq.*, 285 ; *haute justice*, 156.
- Lacoste, Minister of Marine, (March to July, 1792), 373.
- Lafayette, Marquis de, 137, 145 ; Commandant of National Guard, 143, 146 ; and insurrection of women, 191 *seq.* ; and queen, 199 ; and Body Guard, 201 ; and *Fête de la Fédération*, 260 ; and episode of poignards, 305 ; and king's journey to Saint-Cloud, 307 *seq.* ; and flight of king, 318, 327, 332 ; and massacre of Champ de Mars, 343 ; army of, 377 ; and Jacobins, 391 *seq.*, 396 *seq.* ; and king, 397, 408 ; charge against dismissed, 421.
- Lally-Tollendal, Comte de, 70, 98, 143, 144 ; retires from *comité de constitution*, 170 ; leader of the Right, 211.
- Lambesc, Prince de, 119, 152.
- Lameth, Alexandre de, leader of Left, 212 ; on Jacobin Club, 216 ; and monuments, 255 ; on right of declaring war, 265 : as Feuillant, 355.
- Lameth, Charles, 338 ; leader of Left, 212 ; of Right, 355.
- Langres, Bishop of, 212.
- Laporte, Intendant of Civil List, 320.
- Larevellière-Lépaux, L. M. de, 61, 137.
- Launay, B. R. J. de, Governor of the Bastille, 128 *seq.* ; his murder, 132.
- Lecointre, and the events of October 1789, 177, 185.
- Leguen de Kérangal, 162.
- Leopold II., Emperor of Austria, and France, 273, 364, 372 ; proposes European Congress, 359 ; death of, 372.
- Lèse-nation*, crime of, 371.
- Lessart, de, Minister of Interior (Jan. to Nov., 1791) ; of Foreign Affairs (1791-1792), 367 ; sent for trial to Orléans, 372.
- Lettres de cachet*, 38, 128, 281.
- Lettres de maîtrise*, 46.
- "Liberty and Equality," 181, 222.
- Liberty of the Press, 38, 75, 222, 281.
- "Litanies" of the Third Estate, 44.
- Losme, Major de, 132.
- Louis XIII., 6.
- Louis XIV., 2, 8.
- Louis XVI., progress in reign of, 6 *seq.*, 11 ; and Necker, 26, 100 ; characteristics, 28, 85, 99, 103, 153, 198, 278 ; and States-General, 37 *seq.*, 64 *seq.* ; and Third Estate, 56, 57, 86, 87 ; popularity of, 85, 257 ; at opening of States-General, 86 ; at *Séance royale*, 98 ; on July 15, 1789, 141 ; and National Assembly, 104, 140, 157 ; Paris and, 136 *seq.*, 144 *seq.*, 192, 309 *seq.*, 323 *seq.*, 340 ; 'Father of the Country,' 142 ; 'Restorer of French Liberty,' 164 ; schemes and rumours of flight, 175, 276, 305, 379, 408 ; and Declaration of Rights,

- 178, 186; and veto, 392; and insurrection of women, 182, 183 *seq.*; and Body Guard, 201; life at Tuileries, 204 *seq.*; new title, 206; oaths to Constitution, 247, 260, 348; and Constitution, 261, 321, 331, 345, 357; ceremonial and, 256, 257, 347; and right of peace and war, 265; and civil war, 269, 302; and *émigrés*, 275, 365, 371; and foreign Powers, 276, 362, 364; and civil constitution of the clergy, 292, 300, 307, 370; dismisses Gentlemen of Bed-Chamber, 311; flight to Varennes, 317 *seq.*; his manifesto, 320; return to Paris, 331 *seq.*; Republicans and, 336 *seq.*; loses his Constitutional Guard, 380; dismisses 'patriot' ministers, 383; and Elector of Trèves, 371; and declaration of war, 375, 376; on June 20, 395; his last ministry, 401; and suspension of Pétion, 402; Lafayette and, 397, 408; petitions for dethronement of, 411, 413, 417, 419; leaves the Tuileries, 427; removed to Temple, 428; death, 429.
- Louis-Charles, Dauphin, 177, 199.
- Louis - Joseph - François - Xavier, Dauphin, 59, 87, 90.
- Luckner, Maréchal, 377.
- Luzerne, Comte de, Minister of the Marine (1789-1790), 116.
- Lyons, 10, 271.
- Maillard, S., and events of October, 1789, 180, 181.
- Mallet du Pan, J., secret mission, 376, 418.
- Malouet, P. V. de, on closing of Salle des Menus-Plaisirs, 94; leader of Right, 211; and *Club des Impartiaux*, 217.
- Manant, 22, 45, 81.
- Mandat, A. J. G., Marquis de, Commandant of National Guard, 415, 425, 427.
- Manifesto, of Brunswick, Commander of Allies, 418.
- Manuel, L. P., Procureur-Général-Syndic of the Commune, suspended, 401; and sections, 409.
- Marat, J. P., *Ami du peuple*, 217; proposes dictatorship, 335.
- Marc d'argent*, 221, 339.
- Marck, de la, Comte de, 264, 278.
- Marie-Antoinette, and Brienne, 26; and Necker, 26, 100, 101; at opening of States-General, 59, 64; and Flanders regiment, 176; and insurrection of women, 195, 197 *seq.*; abuse of, 145, 199, *seq.*; on removal to Paris, 203, 205; and *Fête de la Fédération*, 261; Mirabeau and, 266; and Austria, 273; distrust of Constitutionals, 279; and Constitution, 311, 345; loss of servants, 312; and king's manifesto, 322 *seq.*; on royalist reaction, 344, and king's visit to Assembly, 348; on Declaration of Pillnitz, 361; proposes European coalition, 362, and *émigrés*, 363; and death of Gustave, 375; on June 20th, 1792, 395; death of, 429.
- Marly, councils at Palace of, 90, 93; proposal of National Assembly to go there, 94.
- Marseillais, The, 415 *seq.*; entrance to Paris, 416; and king, 417.
- Martial law, 208.
- Martineau, L. S., and primitive church, 239.
- Mauconseil, Section of, 413.
- Maury, Abbé, and noble titles, 256; and Necker, 288.
- Mémoire des princes*, 32, 33, 34.
- Menus-Plaisirs, Hôtel de, 63, 67; Salle de, 63.
- Mercy-Argenteau, Comte de, 26, 345; and Necker, 104; and queen's friends, 153; and Mirabeau, 263; one of Austrian Committee, 368.
- Merlin de Thionville, 356.

Métayer, 23.

Metz, proposal of removing Assembly to, 105; proposed flight of king to, 175 n., 269.

Milice bourgeoise, 132, 143; formation of, 120, arms for, 123, 125 *seq.*; king sanctions, 146; Lafayette, head of, 153. *See* National Guard.

Ministers, and forms of States-General, 37; and *séance royale*, 90, 97; dismissal of, July 1789, 116; recall of, 144; relation to National Assembly, 157 *seq.*; and king's removal to Paris, 200; and flight of king, 320 *seq.*; changes during Legislative Assembly, 367 *seq.*, 372 *seq.*, 378, 383, 401.

Mirabeau, H. G. Riquetti, Comte de, and States-General, 66, 79; member of Breton Club, 74; *Courrier de Provence*, 74; and title of National Assembly, 81; and *séance royale*, 99; on concentration of troops, 113, 138; and king, 140, 207, 263, 268; and two Chambers, 169; and veto, 171; and the executive, 224, 267; and goods of the clergy, 234; adviser to Crown, 264; "Notes to the Court," 265, 267, 277; and Marie-Antoinette, 266; on civil war, 267, 269; death of, 278; on German princes in Alsace, 303.

Miromandre, M. de, Body Guard, 196.

Moleville, Bertrand de, Minister of the Marine (1791-1792), 368, 389.

Monarchy, an Article of Constitution, 169, 171; reaction in favour of, 338; fall of, 428, 430.

Monastic orders, 236 *seq.*; perpetual vows no longer legal, 236; suppression of houses, 237; of orders, 238.

Mons, attack on, 377.

Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, 11.

Montesquiou, General, 377,

Montmartre, work for unemployed at, 119.

Montmédy, 315.

Montmorin, Comte de, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1787-1791), 116, 322; resigns, 367; one of "Austrian Committee," 368, 380; and king, 407.

Mounier, J. J., and title of National Assembly, 81; and Constitution, 166, 170; and insurrection of women, 182, 186; leader of the Right, 211, 212.

Municipalities, institution of, 150; law concerning, 218.

Municipality of Paris, origin of, 123; and king, 145, 192, 203, 312; first, 149 *seq.*; "The Three Hundred," 149 n.; and insurrection of women, 190 *seq.*; and martial law, 208, 343; closes convent chapels, 308; measures taken on flight of king, 319; revolutionary character of, 386, 391, 405, 422 *seq.* *See also* *Bureau de la ville*, *comité permanent*, *comité provisoire*, *Commune de Paris*.

Municipality of Versailles, and insurrection of women, 182, 185.

Nancy, mutiny at, 282.

Nancy, Bishop of (de la Fare), 62, 262.

Narbonne, Louis de, Minister of War (1791-1792), 367; allies himself to party of Brissot, 370; dismissed, 372.

National Assembly, First or Constituent, constituted, 81, 83; divisions in, 104; relation of ministers to, 157; committees of, 158; Articles of Constitution, 169, 351 *seq.*; removes to Paris, 207; attitude towards flight of king, 320 *seq.*; change in feeling of people towards, 341; completion of Constitution, 344 *seq.*; dissolution of, 353; self-denying ordinance of, 354.

- National Assembly, Second or Legislative, parties in, 354; legislation of, on non-jurors and *émigrés*, 365 *seq.*, 380; suspension of Pétion, 402; dethronement of king, 411, 420 *seq.*
- National Convention, 413; decreed, 429; abolishes monarchy, 430.
- National Guard of Paris, its organisation, 151, 190; and Body Guard, 197, 201; has charge of Tuileries, 204; and populace, 343; replaces king's Constitutional Guard, 380; and camp round Paris, 382; disbanding of its *état-major*, 398.
- National Guard of Versailles, 146, 176, 178, 182, 184, 185.
- National Guards, under command of municipalities, 208.
- Navy, tricolour flag adopted in, 274; revolt in, 285.
- Necker, J., Minister of Finance (1776-1781, 1788-1791), 13, 86; and finance, 27, 168, 228, 230, 287, 288; as a statesman, 28, 36; and Notables, 30; and States-General, 36 *seq.*, 38, 43, 65, 78, 91, 96; and king, 89, 91, 104, 192, 200; and people, 100 *seq.*, 112, 147, 157, 289; dismissed, 100; recalled, 144; resigned, 289.
- Negroes, and civil rights, 222.
- Newspapers, political, 73, 217.
- Noailles, Vicomte de, 138, 161.
- Nobles, and elections, 41, 48; at opening of States-General, 55; and Third Estate, 68, 72, 75 *seq.*, 78, 89; division among, 70; renounce pecuniary privilege, 75; join Third Estate, 101.
- Nonjurors, to have their own chapels, 305. *See also* Clergy.
- Notables, second meeting of, 31 *seq.*
- Notre-Dame de Paris, 51, 245; First States-General met in, 20.
- Notre-Dame de Versailles, 57, 58, 59, 92.
- Noyon, proposal to remove Assembly to, 114.
- Oaths, at constitution of National Assembly, 83; of Jeu de Paume, 96; military, 250, 326; to Constitution, 242, 249, 260, 348.
- Orders, The Three, 20 *seq.*; Crown and, 39; forbidden to meet, June 19, 1789, 91; union of, 102; disregarded in municipal elections, 149; distinctions between abolished, 210. *See also* Clergy, Nobles, Third Estate.
- Orléans, Supreme Court of, 372, 380, 401.
- Orléans, Louis-Philippe-Joseph Duc d', and Crown, 60; joins Third Estate, 101; and Palais-Royal, 106; and riots, 108, 194.
- Ouvriers, 23.
- Pacte de Famille*, The, 264.
- Palais de Justice (Paris), 19, 29; closing of, 287.
- Palais d'Orléans, *see* Palais-Royal.
- Palais-Royal, a revolutionary centre, 107, 112, 113, 115, 118, 119, 133, 152, 175, 341, 398.
- Pamphlets of 1789, 19, 21.
- Panthéon, and memory of great men, 279.
- Paris, and the Crown, 2, 142, 186, 189, 203, 307 *seq.*; and States-General, 54; and National Assembly, 83, 106, 142, 165, 175; troops concentrated on, 105, 113 *seq.*; old authorities gone, 148; and famine, 178; *fédérés* and, 404 *seq.*
- Paris (Juigné, L. de), Archbishop of, opposes union of Orders, 92; on withdrawal of troops, 139.
- Parlement of Paris, 3, 19; and the privileged, 14; and States-General, 29, 32; renounces pecuniary privilege, 33; opposes union of Orders, 92; functions of, 155; abolished, 287.
- Parlements, The, 5; and the people, 14; and Crown, 17; and liberty of speech, 19; functions of, 156; abolition of, 224, 287.

Patriote français, Le, 217, 334.

Pays d'élection, 34.

Pays d'états, 34, 70.

Périer, Claude, 36.

Petit Journal du Palais-Royal, 235.

Pétion, J., member of Breton club, 74; on king's title, 206; on monastic orders, 238; and flight of king, 326; popularity, 344, 407; as Mayor, 388, 392, 415, 416, 419; suspension and reinstatement of, 401 *seq.*

"Petition of the Twenty Thousand," 396.

Philippe-le-Bel., 18, 24.

Pillnitz, declaration of, 360; Marie-Antoinette and, 361.

Pius VI. and civil constitutions of the clergy, 292 *seq.*, 297.

Place d'Armes, Versailles, 94, 139, 182, 183, 184, 185, 194, 195.

Place de Grève, 46, 131, 132, 133, 139, 180, 190, 191, 207, 245.

Place du Carrousel, 309, 394, 427.

Place Louis XV., 119, 252, 258, 331.

Place Vendôme, 328.

Place des Victoires, 255.

Poissardes, The, 108, 202, 308, 327.

Poitiers (Saint-Aulaire), Bishop of, 297.

Primary assemblies, 41, 225.

Princes of the blood, *Mémoire de*, 32, 33; required to remain in France, 304.

Privilege, 11; king and those of upper orders, 55; abolition of, 158, 163.

Protestants, and civil rights, 8, 222.

Provence, Comte de, 32, 197, 202; rumour of his leaving Paris, 304; as *émigré*, 360, 365; on Marie-Antoinette, 429.

Provincial assemblies, institution of, 7, 34.

Provinces, disquiet in, 28, 160, 174, 218; abolition of, 219 *seq.*

Prudhomme, publisher of *Les Révolutions de Paris*, 217.

Prussia, and Austria, 273, 303, 359, 361, 376, 379, 401; and France, 273, 303, 361, 379.

Puységur, Minister of War (1789), dismissed, 116.

Quartiers, 47.

Quinze-Vingts, section of, 424, 425.

Rabaut-Saint-Etienne, J. P., 170, 212.

Regiment of Flanders, 176, 182; banquet, 176 *seq.*

Règlements of Jan. 24th, 1789, 42; of April 13th, 1789, 46.

Republic, first openly advocated, 334; attitude of Jacobins towards, 335; decreed, 430.

Republicans, The, distinguished from Democrats, 336; and Constitutionalists, 339; petitions on fate of king, 340, 341, 343; reaction against, 344, 412.

Résultat du Conseil, 37, 55, 86.

Réveillon riot, 109, 111.

Révolutions de Paris, 217, 334, 355, 356, 365, 366, 394.

Révolutions de France et de Brabant 217.

Richelieu, 3.

Robespierre, Max., 344; member of Breton club, 74; and Legislative Assembly, 354; and *fédérés*, 405, 406.

Rochambeau, General Vicomte de, 327, 329.

Rochefoucauld, Cardinal de la, 102.

Rochefoucauld, d'Amville, Duc de la, President of Directory of the Department of Paris, 311.

Rœderer, P. L., Procurator-Syndic of the Department, 391, 421, 423, 427.

Roland de la Platière, Minister of the Interior, March to June, 1792, 373, 374, 378; letter to king, 382; dismissed, 383.

Roland, Madame (Jeanne-Marie Philpon), 382.

- Romainvilliers, Commandant of the National Guard, 392, 396, 397.
 Romans, 36.
 Rousseau, J. J., 12.
 "Royal Allemand," The, 119.
 Russia and Austria, 272, 359; and France, 272, 274.
 Saint-Antoine, Faubourg of, 107, 119, 128, 305, 424, 426.
 Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, 309, 313.
 Saint-Marceau, Faubourg of, 394, 426.
 Saint-Méry, Moreau de, 147.
 Salle des États. *See* Menus-Plaisirs, Salle des.
 Salle de l'Opéra, Versailles, banquet in, 177 *seq.*
 Salle du Manège, description of, 210.
 Salle des Séances (Salle du Manège).
 Santerre, C., 414, 416, 417.
 Sardinia and *émigrés*, 273, 359.
 Seal of State, The, and decrees, 323, 333.
Séance royale, 91, 97 *seq.*, 104.
 Sections, The, and king, 329, 413, 426; substitution of, for districts, 386; *bureau de correspondance*, 409; petition of, for dethronement of king, 413.
 Seignorial rights, 161, 163.
 Serfs, freedom of, 7, 163.
 Servan, Joseph, Minister of War (April to June, 1792), 378; and camp round Paris, 381, 382, 405; dismissed, 383.
 Sicard, Abbé, 10.
 Siéyès, E. J., Abbé, and Third Estate, 53, 79; member of Breton club, 74; and title of National Assembly, 81; and *Séance royale*, 99.
 Sillery, Marquis de, 146, 147.
 Simonneau, Mayor of Étampes, *fête* in honour of, 389.
Six Corps, The, 9.
Société des Amis de la Constitution.
See Breton and Jacobin Clubs.
Société des Amis des Noirs, 10.
Sociétés fraternelles, 335.
Sociétés fraternelles des deux Sexes, 328.
 Soissons, proposal to remove Assembly to, 114, 159; camp at, 405, 417.
 Sombreuil, Marquis de, Governor of Bastille, 127.
 Spain and *émigrés*, 273.
 Staël, Madame de, and king, 408.
 States-General, promised, 4, 16 old, 4 *seq.*, 17, 28; and privilege, 15; and grievances, 16; forms of, 20 *seq.*, 29, 40; opening of, 55 *seq.*; procedure in, 72; addresses to king, 87, 88; became National Assembly, 83, 102.
 Swiss Guard, The, 111, 145.
Taille, 22.
 Talleyrand-Périgord, C. M. de, Bishop of Autun, on church property, 233; at *Fête de la Fédération*, 260; takes civil oath, 295; a member of Directory of Departments 311.
 Tarbé, Minister of Finance (1791-1792), 367.
 Target, G. J. B., 76.
 Taxes, States-General and, 5, 13; and privilege, 7, 13, 33; and National Assembly, 69, 90; non-payment of, 167, 230.
 Temple, The, royal family in, 428.
 Terrier de Monciel, Minister of the Interior (June to July, 1792), 405.
 Territorial divisions, new, 219 *seq.*
 Théâtre-Français, section of, 314.
 Third Estate, The, and old States-General, 4, 23; its political significance, 21, 154; two classes in, 22, *seq.*; Notables and, 31; and upper Orders, 33, 34, 68, 72, 75 *seq.*; elections of, 47 *seq.*; king and, 56, 65, 76, 84, 86 *seq.*, 89 *seq.*
 Thouret, J. G., 212.
 Thuriot, Paris elector, 129.
 Tithes, abolition of, 163, 233, 234.

- Toulouse, tumult in 1790, 271.
 Toulouse, Archbishop of, 264.
 Tournay, attack on, 377.
 Tourzel, Madame de, governess of royal children, 202, 309.
 Trade corporations, 7, 9, 11.
 Treilhard, J. B., 239.
 Trèves, Elector of, 301, 370, 371.
Tribunal de paix, 225.
 Tricolour cockade, 146, 181; flag, 146, 274.
 Tuileries, 305, 407; invasions of, 394 *seq.*, 427; proposed attacks on; 414, 417.
 Turgot, Anne-Robert-Jacques, 13, 86, 230.
 Tussaud, Madame, 121 n.
 Varennes, 315, 330.
 Vergniaud, P. V., leader of Left in Legislative Assembly, 356; member of war-party, 368; and Crown, 373, 399.
 Versailles, troops concentrated on, 105, 113, 139; attack on château of, 194 *seq.*; king leaves, 202; Assembly leaves, 207.
 Veto, question of, 169 *seq.*; king exercises, 365.
 Vienne, Archbishop of, 92, 137.
 Villedieu, Minister of the King's Household (July, 1789; Controller-General, 1787), 116.
 Vincennes, forest of, 204; château of, 304.
 Vizille, château of, 36.
 Vote by Order or by head, 31, 32, 65, 69, 71; provincial assemblies and, 34.
 War, right of declaring, 265; fear of, after flight of king, 329; and Legislative assembly, 364; declared against Austria, 375; reverses in, 377 *seq.*; patriotic contributions towards, 378; declared against Prussia, 401.
 Westphalia, Treaty of, 302.
 Women, Insurrection of, 179 *seq.*
 Worms, *émigré* camp at, 301.

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311

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